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THE
GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

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"THE DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS" AND
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EPHESIANS to COLOSSIANS

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THE CHURCH.

The church, which is his body.—Eph. i. 22, 23.

1. EVERY article of the Creed is the subject of controversy. There are those who challenge the existence of God; there are those who dispute the Divinity of our Lord; there are those who deny the personality and presence of the Holy Ghost. But those who make such denials are for the most part outside the Christian Church. They are men who disbelieve in revealed religion altogether. When, however, we come to discuss the subject of "the Church," we are entering upon what is a matter of angry debate amongst Christians themselves.

Of all wars, the most bitter and disastrous are civil wars. "The Church" is an occasion of civil war amongst Christian folk; it stirs up internecine strife; it splits up Christian people into antagonistic and hostile camps. Right away from the days of the Donatist controversy to these days of ours, it has been the fruitful cause of division and conflict. Its disastrous effects are only too manifest; it has inflicted upon Christ's cause infinitely more damage than all the attacks of critics and sceptics from Celsus down to Robert Blatchford; it has weakened the efforts of Christian people and paralysed their energies. The strength that ought to have been employed in fighting the world, the flesh and the devil, is frittered and wasted in mutual recrimination and strife. The swords that ought to be turned against a common enemy we turn against one another. Look at the Christian people of England at this time, rent and torn and divided as they are, suspicious of one another and often fiercely hostile to one another. Think of that miserable education controversy which has been, for all these years, embittering and poisoning the very springs of our social and national life. The quarrel—to our shame be it said—is a quarrel amongst Christian people. If

Christian people would only compose their differences, the quarrel would be settled in a week; but the quarrel drags its ugly length along, the interests of the child are sacrificed and the interests of religious instruction itself are jeopardized, all because Christian people cannot live together in peace and concord. This bitter strife, these fierce and incessant quarrels of ours—they give the devil his opportunity, but they must make the angels weep.

¶ "Tell Mr. Horne," said the Bishop of London not very long ago, referring to some joint action he and Mr. Silvester Horne had taken for the moral welfare of the metropolis, and in which they had been brilliantly successful—"Tell Mr. Horne we can always win when we are united." Yes, united we could always win. In every great fight for liberty and righteousness and truth and purity, we could always win. We are baffled and beaten because, instead of being united, we are split up into a number of warring sects. "*Divide et impera!*" was the cynical advice of the Roman statesman; "Divide and rule!" "Split up your opponents and so retain the supreme authority." Looking abroad over the religious condition of England, one is almost tempted to say that that has been the devil's policy. He has sown seeds of dissension amongst the Christian people, and while they have been quarrelling, he has kept his power; he has split up our forces and beaten us in detail.[1]

2. Unity will never be secured by banishing the question of the Church from our public speech; unity is to be gained only by arriving at right views about the Church. It is difference of view that keeps us apart at present; it is only a true understanding of the Church that will ever bring us together.

¶ Behind all the divisions and antagonisms I detect a real spiritual unity. And as I gaze at all these sects at war amongst themselves, I seem to behold them melt into a glorious and blessed fellowship. Behind these manifold and differing churches, I *believe* there is a Holy Catholic Church. Turn to your hymn-book, and you will see what I mean. Men who belonged to different churches, and who were separated from one another by ecclesiastical party walls, meet in our hymn-books; Roman Catholic, Anglican, Nonconformist—they jostle one another in its pages. When we want to sing the praises of Jesus, this is what we sing:

Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;

[1] J. D. Jones, *Things Most Surely Believed*, 147.

and it is the monk, Bernard, that leads our song. When we want to offer a prayer for guidance we cry:

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;

and it is Cardinal Newman that leads our song. When we want to sing of our duty to foreign lands and heathen people, this is the hymn we sing:

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand;

and it is the Anglican Bishop Heber who leads our song. And when we want to sing of the "sweet wonders of the Cross" we say:

In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;

and it is actually the Unitarian, Sir John Bowring, who leads our song. There *is* a Catholic Church. Even the most exclusive churches are constrained to acknowledge it. Isaac Watts never was allowed to preach in Westminster Abbey, but scarcely any great function takes place there but they sing Isaac Watts's hymn:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come.

There *is* a Catholic Church. Behind all our divisions there is a great and blessed unity.[1]

3. The doctrine of the Church reaches its completest statement in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and perhaps the words of the text sum up the Apostle's teaching. We do not sufficiently recognize the ardour of faith which glows in St. Paul's language. Christianity was then a very small thing in the world; it had behind it no famous history, rich in heroic and saintly memories; it had not expressed itself in a vast and various literature, including the masterpieces of the human mind; it did not preside over the world's proudest civilization. Christianity was the creed of a few obscure communities scattered thinly over the Roman Empire, and composed mostly of the humblest members of society—slaves, freed-men, poor artisans. The Apostle could be under no

[1] J. D. Jones, *Things Most Surely Believed*, 159.

delusions on the subject; and, as a matter of fact, he was now in prison at Rome, in a position well calculated to chasten enthusiasm. Yet he writes in these sublime terms of the Church. The little Christian congregations become transformed by his ardent faith. He sees them inspired with Divine energies, commissioned for eternal destinies, crowned with heavenly beauty. All the world is petty in comparison with them; they are marked out for universal sway. All history leads up to them, and in their fortunes is bound up the welfare of the nations. They enshrine the hopes of the human race, for they carry the graces of the Redemption. The historic triumph of Christ finds in them its visible expression; they are the instrument of His conquests.

¶ The work which Christ came to do on earth was not completed when He passed from the sight of men: He, the Head, needed a body of members for its full working out through the ages: part by part He was, as St. Paul says, to be fulfilled in the community of His disciples, whose office in the world was the outflow of His own. And on the other hand His disciples had no intelligible unity apart from their ascended Head, who was also to them the present central fountain of life and power.[1]

The subject is the Church as the Body of Christ. We may consider—

I. The Use of the Words "Church" and "Body."
II. The Ideal Church.
III. The Ideal made Actual.

I.

The Words "Church" and "Body."

1. **Church.**—The word "Church" is used in the New Testament upwards of one hundred and ten times; and the fact that it occurs so frequently, and that it is used in the most solemn and important connexions, is sufficient proof of its pre-eminent importance, and sufficient reason why our ideas of its significance should be consistent and luminous.

(1) In not one single instance is the word used to describe a

[1] F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, 148.

building, whether of stone or of other material, of imposing splendour or of humble pretensions. When the places in which we meet for the worship of God are called by this sacred name, it is by that common figure of speech by which ideas are transferred from the thing itself to the principal instrument, or means, by which it is embodied, or represented. Thus, when we speak of the power of the press, we mean not the mere iron or steel of which it is constructed, but the thoughts and ideas and information that are by its means multiplied and spread abroad.

(2) Fundamentally, the word is "an assembly"; not ecclesiastical, but civil. Nor is it used exclusively in the ecclesiastical sense in the New Testament. The town clerk of Ephesus "dismissed the assembly." The word used by St. Luke would bear the interpretation that "he set free the Church." But there is no confusion in the use of the term; there is no doubt in which cases it means "the Church," and in which cases it means something else.

(3) But even when the meaning is a Christian one, it is not always the same. There is more than a shade of difference between one case and another, and the difference is important. For example, we have mention of the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, and of the church in the house of Philemon; and of Lydia being "baptized, and her household." In these cases it may imply the family, and a few surrounding neighbours who were in the habit of meeting for common prayer.

(4) It is used next of the Churches or assemblies of Christians in particular localities, as when we read of the Church of Jerusalem, or the Churches of Asia or Galatia, or the Church that is in Corinth.

(5) Lastly, it is used of the whole body of believers in all times and in all places, as when our Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"; or, as when St. Paul describes it as "the pillar and ground of the truth."

It is this last and widest use of the word that is characteristic of the great Epistle to the Ephesians. When St. Paul talks about Christ being Head of all things to the Church, when he talks about Christ loving the Church and giving Himself for it, it is not simply the Church at Ephesus he is thinking of, but that

greater Church, that universal Church, which embraces and includes the holy and the loving and the good everywhere.

2. **Body.**—The only point about the use of the word "body" to be observed at present is the distinction between Christ's body which He took of Mary and His body which is the Church. Christ's body which He took of Mary He wears in Heaven. He is manifested there in it, as "the Lamb as it had been slain," *i.e.* with the wound-prints upon Him. He wears for ever the robe of our nature, the glorified yet real human form; the angels see it. But He is manifested on earth in His mystical or spiritual body, which in some way expresses and manifests Him. He is clothed in a body here, He is still incarnate here in the Church, He still acts and speaks among men. So He said again and again, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me"—ye, the disciples; *i.e.* those who in every age have eyes to see.

¶ Why did our Lord institute the Church in the world? What is the one great doctrine? It is summed up in words the most exact that human speech could find—the Church, the immortal Body of Christ. That body which was mortal here, and was so marvellously changed, has gone up yonder, but the immortal body of Christ is here; the body in which He lives, still to speak the truth of God, to work the works of God, with these folded hands to plead as intercessors. Oh! for the Church, the body of our Lord, that it might wear on earth the beauty of the Lord, and be His representative on earth until He come![1]

II.

The Ideal Church.

1. The Church doctrine of this Epistle is inestimably precious. The word "Church" occurs frequently. We have it here, in a connexion high as the heavens, and full of the very deepest spiritual suggestions. We have it in chapter iii. 10, where "the Church" is beheld as the scene in which, even now, "the governments and the authorities in the celestial regions" get informed of "the variegated wisdom of God, according to His purpose of the ages."

[1] *Life of J. B. Paton*, 287.

We have it again in iii. 21, where "glory" is given to the Eternal Father, "in the Church, in Christ Jesus," throughout eternity. And in the fifth chapter (23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32) we have it set fully before us as the Bride and Spouse of the Lord Himself. He is the Church's Head, the Saviour of the Body; it is subject to Him, with wifely reverence; He loved it, He gave Himself for it, to hallow it, to cleanse it "by the bathing of the water attended by an utterance," to present it to Himself glorified, spotless, holy. He nourishes it and cherishes it. He and His Spouse are one.

Here is on the one hand an Ecclesia which is lifted for our view far above mere terrestrial and visible limitations. The one allusion to the external is the reference to the "water," but even this is at once so connected with the "utterance" (ῥῆμα) of the everlasting Covenant as to point us straight through the ordinance to the heavenly blessing which it seals. The whole conception soars in the high air of direct spiritual relations between the Lord and a redeemed Company, whose units are all joined in an ineffable reality of faith and love to Him, *and so* member to member. We may call it the Ideal Church. We may call it the Invisible, in the sense of invisibility which points to an Organism seen in its true limits and relations by God alone. Yet it is a something which refuses to be really identified with any one organization, or aggregate of organizations, officered and tabulated by human ministers. It is related more nearly, may we not say, to heaven than to earth. It is, in its essence, with Christ where He is. It is the wonder of angels. It is the sphere within which glory is given to God as much in eternity (iii. 21) as in time. It (not parts of it, but it) is to be presented to its Lord at last in the heavenly light. Let us beware of lowering the radiant sublimity of the conception by definitions of the Church essentially conditioned by time.

¶ There is a particular conception of the nature of the Church to which I desire to give prominence and distinctness, believing that in this conception is to be found the key which will reduce into order the various notions which the word "Church" sets floating in our minds. In our Collect for All Saints' Day the term "mystical" is associated with the Church, or we should say that the Collect is describing the Church when it speaks of knitting "together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship,

in the mystical body of Thy Son Christ our Lord." To many, perhaps, the word "mystical" is nearly the same as mysterious: others would explain it as meaning spiritual. I would suggest that the nearest modern equivalent to it in this place would be "ideal." The mystical body of Christ is a body which exists in idea. The Church is primarily an idea of the living God—an idea, not as we should speak of your idea or mine or any other man's, but, what is a very different thing, an idea of God, and of a God who lives and works, and in the creative mind a foreordained purpose which God is working out by degrees in the world of His creatures.[1]

2. Is there any better way out of our difficulties than to lay hold of that conception of the Church as an ideal body which St. Paul suggests to us? In thinking thus of the Church we start from God and Christ, and not from visible organizations. We find the substance and reality of the Church, not in the forms with which it clothes itself in the development of the ages, but in the purposes of God which He is revealing to us in history. We may gain some help by thinking of the design of a picture or a group of sculpture which exists in the artist's mind. The work has reached a certain stage, but we cannot say that this, as it stands, is the picture or the sculpture. We have received perhaps some notion of what is in the artist's mind, but we do not think of the incomplete material representation as the work of art, as the artist's creation. The Apostles have given us the conception of a body of Christ, which they themselves derive, not so much from verbal instruction as from the ardent contemplation of Christ Himself. They saw that Christ raised and exalted was a Head who must have a body; they looked round on the societies which they had been impelled to form, and this helped them to conceive what a perfect body of Christ might be. They beheld an immeasurable number of human beings all attached by spiritual apprehension to Christ, fulfilling the most various functions, in the happiest harmony with each other, and so leading to the growth and perfection of the whole body; they believed in this design of God as working creatively in the formation of Christian societies, in a Divine power, the same as that which brought in the exaltation of Christ, continually urging design into outward, living fulfilment. If ever the question arose, What

[1] J. Ll. Davies.

is fundamentally and distinctively the Church? the inquirer would be referred to the Divine pattern, that heavenly conception of Christ with associated men into which actual Christian life, with its manifold imperfections, was by Divine energy being built up. The Church of God was both visible and invisible, but it was the invisible form that was satisfactory, permanent, unifying, complete.

¶ If in our own time, seeking for the true Church, we can look through visible societies and members to the real pattern of God, we should not allow our faith to be too much disturbed by the scene which Christendom presents to our view. It is in many respects a shocking scene, with its divisions and corruptions, its faithlessness and its strife, contradicting, one might be tempted to say, the elementary conception of a Catholic Church. But the Divine energy in its marvellous condescension is content to work with the materials of human weakness and perversity, and our joy must be to recognize an institution of apostolic authority, a living expression, revealing the Divine idea of humanity and tending towards visible fulfilment of it.[1]

¶ This is the difficulty of all the highest service of life, namely, that the spiritual is *invisible*, and yet omnipotent; public attention is fixed upon the human agent, and professions of spiritual inspiration and impulse are treated with distrust, if not with contempt, by the most of mankind. It is the *invisible* Christ who is with the Church. Were He present manifestly, it is supposed that greater results would accrue from Christian service; but the supposition must be mistaken, inasmuch as He to whom such service is infinitely dearer than it ever can be to ourselves has determined the manner of Christian evangelization. What, then, is the great duty and privilege of the Church? It is to realize the presence and influence of the Invisible. The Church is actually to *see* the *Unseen*.[2]

3. Except as an ideal, except as a vision, the perfect outward symmetry and beauty have never yet been seen, because the professing Church and the true Church have never yet been coextensive. The magnificent conception of the perfect spiritual temple in all its majestic proportions has never been realized. You can see the great outline, you can admire the grand simplicity and the marvellous harmony of the design, as you may in some great Cathedral on whose glorious beauty Time has laid his

[1] J. Ll. Davies. [2] J. Parker.

defacing hand; but as in that there may be the crushed and defaced pillar, and the ugly rents and fissures and gaps even in the central tower, so the visible Church of Christ has been torn by heresies and schisms, her very safety threatened, her very central tower shaken and ready to fall, had not the hand of God stayed up her pillars and repaired her ruins.

¶ The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yet, here in this miserable, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest,—here or nowhere is thy Ideal! Work it out therefrom![1]

¶ Remember, it is the Ideal that rules the world, that moves the world; and the true Church of Christ is ever an ideal, a dream, a prophecy, a vision, an aspiration; but a dream, a prophecy, a vision of the future, in seeking after which is ever found the best hope for the practical life of the present. For it is the idealists, the seers of the race, who are ever the reformers; it is the men who see visions and dream dreams of possible progress and happiness, and not the pessimistic and social agnostics, who make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.[2]

¶ The intense enthusiasm with which Mr. Gladstone entered into the subject and the object of the moment was apt to dim, if not obliterate, the little loves and affections which crowd the life of smaller men. The execution of his great work was the one thing in his eyes, and the instruments and tools he used were dearer to him than anything else; and the men associated with him at the moment were always greater than the men who had passed away. He became absorbed in the task, whatever it might be, which he had set himself to do; he was not one of those who, having put their hand to the plough, knew what it was to turn back.[3]

Have we not all, amid life's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a noble life
That once seemed possible? Did we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach? It was. And yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vague regret.
But still *our place is kept*, and it will wait,
Ready for us to fill it, soon or late:
No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been.

[1] Carlyle. [2] C. W. Stubbs. [3] Algernon West, *Recollections*, ii. 33.

Since Good, though only thought, has life and breath,
God's life—can always be redeemed from death;
And evil, in its nature, is decay,
And any hour can blot it all away;
The hopes that lost in some far distance seem,
May be the truer life, and this the dream.[1]

III.

The Ideal made Actual.

How is this ideal Church to be made the Church that we see and know? How is the Church to fulfil its office as the Body of Christ? How is it to be the Body of Christ in deed and in truth? That is the great question which when answered answers all other questions concerning the Church.

1. *The Church must establish a living relationship with the risen Lord.*—"And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body." The figure used by the Apostle shows what kind of relationship exists between Christ and His Church. In this relationship we see the fundamental truth, the central truth, the truth which contains every other truth, concerning the Church. One of the Old Testament prophets—Isaiah—poetically describes God's constant remembrance of His own, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." This poetic imagery has become a glorious fact in Jesus Christ. Through His Incarnation and Crucifixion and Resurrection, we can say that God now has the marks of the nails upon His hands which always make Him mindful of His own. As King and Head of the mediatory kingdom, Christ must have His people even as a sovereign must have his subjects. And they need not only His rule but also His Divine strength in them. The Church can never succeed without Christ. The risen Lord made the Church, the risen Lord keeps the Church, the risen Lord fills the Church all in all. "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him

[1] Adelaide Procter.

from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

¶ The communion which the members of His body have with the Head is threefold. (1) It is a communion of *mind*. "We have the mind of Christ." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (2) It is a communion of *heart*. "Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." "The fellowship of his sufferings." (3) It is a communion of *power*. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me." This threefold communion with the risen Lord is finely expressed in F. W. H. Myers' *Saint Paul*:

> Then thro' the mid complaint of my confession,
> Then thro' the pang and passion of my prayer,
> Leaps with a start the shock of His possession,
> Thrills me and touches, and the Lord is there.
>
> Scarcely I catch the words of His revealing,
> Hardly I hear Him, dimly understand,
> Only the Power that is within me pealing
> Lives on my lips and beckons to my hand.
>
> Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
> Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
> Yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

2. *The Church must recognize a real brotherhood among its members.*—We shall be helped to understand the meaning of the Apostle's doctrine concerning the Church as a brotherhood if we see what he has written in other portions of his Epistles. In the text he declares that the Church is the body of Christ. He uses the same figure of speech many times. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the

same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each in his part." Nothing can be clearer, in the light of these words, than that the Church of Jesus Christ means a real brotherhood among the members.

¶ A comparatively new method of Christian work is what is known as the Brotherhood Movement. The meetings of this movement are held mostly on Sunday afternoons, and they give a pleasant hour to thousands who never otherwise attend any place of worship. Doubtless the movement has been a boon and a blessing. The president of the movement recently said: "We are part of organized Christianity, and we must ally our forces with other parts of God's great army, and present to the world a united front, and together attack the forces of evil." In the same address he presented some of the perils of the movement, and sounded, not without reason, the note of warning. The Sunday school can speak of its losses through the pleasant enticements of the Brotherhood meetings. Experience will teach us how to avoid the perils, and to secure the best service and most helpful work in the one and the other. The gleams of God's glory shine in buoyant hope wherever the truth of brotherhood is declared. The Church of Christ, which is His body, meets all human needs. The claims of brotherhood are recognized as being far-reaching. These claims are founded upon the relationship which exists between each member and the risen Lord. In Christ we are all brethren.[1]

¶ The name of brother carries with it a sweet and delectable sound, and is in itself an argument for peace. It is true that the complication of interests strangely relaxes the fraternal tie; brethren pursuing their fortune by the same path often jostle and hinder one another; but a common faith originates a true and perfect brotherhood, which nothing should ever be allowed to disturb. The beautiful ideal of brotherly kindness is always a reason for peace. Fraternal discord is an odious spectacle. Strife between those who should be friends is more grievous than an outbreak of plague. . . . Quarrels among brethren are always unnatural, and in the presence of unbelievers—the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land—unspeakably mischievous. There is always a common foe around us, within earshot of our brawling and controversy, rejoicing in our internecine warfare, and watching for our fall. On the other hand, it is beautiful and impressive when men who are united by a common faith and hope live in

[1] J. C. Owen.

love and peace. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

> Religion should extinguish strife,
> And make a calm of human life.[1]

3. *The Church must fulfil its mission to the world.*—Through the Church, which is His body, Christ carries on the work of salvation. Thought cannot express itself apart from the body, even so Christ cannot carry on His work without His Church. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Over the waves of the ages sound the marching orders, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

¶ It is as the Church realizes and expresses the mind and purpose of Christ, that He finds in it the reward of His great sufferings, the satisfaction of His beneficent desires. The stars obedient in their courses, and the flowers lovely in their season, are emblematic of a higher and an enduring perfection in the moral world, where men are won to Christ and choose His will as their highest good. His wisdom, and purity, and grace, and love will then become their abiding possessions, they will be transformed into His nature, and be filled with His disinterested affection, and be moved with a benevolence from whose all-comprehensive sweep nothing can escape.[2]

¶ By holding fast at home Christ's truth in greater purity; by growth in love; by devotion deepened and increased; by more frequent and earnest communion; by a wider, more enduring, more steadfast unity; by being more filled with the Spirit; by being transfigured into Christ's likeness; by sitting always beneath His Cross; by bearing His burden; by learning to do common things in a higher spirit of self-sacrifice and grateful love to Him;—by those, beyond all other ways, shall we become able as a Church to cast abroad a brighter light of truth and to gather in more largely the fulness of the heathen to our Saviour's fold.[3]

¶ People think we missionaries go out to those parts of the world, and from morning to night do nothing but preach sermons. It is quite a mistake. It is not the preaching of a sermon so much as the living the life that tells on the native heart. It is

[1] J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 47.
[2] G. Packer.
[3] Bishop S. Wilberforce.

by living a Divine life, by striving to follow in the footsteps of Him who came to express the Father's love, that we win the heart of the savage, and raise him up to become a true man in Jesus Christ.[1]

One holy Church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place.

From oldest time, on farthest shores,
Beneath the pine or palm,
One Unseen Presence she adores,
With silence, or with psalm.

Her priests are all God's faithful sons,
To serve the world raised up;
The pure in heart, her baptized ones,
Love her communion-cup.

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errand swift,
Do make her pilgrimage.

O living Church, thine errand speed,
Fulfil thy task sublime;
With bread of life earth's hunger feed;
Redeem the evil time![2]

[1] *James Chalmers; Autobiography and Letters*, 274.
[2] Samuel Longfellow.

Salvation the Gift of God.

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Salvation the Gift of God.

By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.—Eph. ii. 8.

These are pregnant words to be written by a prisoner at Rome. St. Paul was always most free in spirit when he was most fettered in body. The longer he lived in drear captivity the riper grew his spirit. This, the last of his great Epistles, is like the swan-song sung in view of inexorable death. For him eternity is filled with God. The Father folds in His bosom the blessed Son, and the Son helps to create the beatitude of the Father. There he reads the mystery, hidden from the ages, but now revealed, that all men might be one in Christ. Then he looks down on man, dead in trespasses and sins, but redeemed in Christ, according to the eternal purpose of God. Then he looks up and sees principalities and powers in heavenly places, learning through Christ the manifold wisdom of God. Then, glancing out, he sees renewed humanity, the Church of Christ, with all its graces and with all its glory. He traces all this to Divine grace working through human faith, all of God, all through man, and the more God passes into man, the more grandly man becomes the image of the living God.

I.

The Nature of Salvation.

1. *It is a salvation from spiritual death.*—In the Bible the word "salvation" is not a technical theological term. It means deliverance generally. Any special import in a particular passage must depend on the context. In the present instance the context clearly shows what kind of salvation St. Paul is thinking

of. This is neither rescue from earthly poverty and pain—the lower old Jewish salvation, nor escape from future torment—the lower Christian salvation. It is deliverance from a present spiritual death. The soul is saved from itself.

Salvation is not only the rescue and deliverance of a man from evils conceived to lie round about him, and to threaten his being from without, it is also his healing from evils which have so wrought themselves into his very being, and infected his whole nature, that the emblem for them is a "sickness unto death," of which this mighty Physician comes for the healing. But salvation is more than a shelter, more than an escape. It not only trammels up evil possibilities, and prevents them from falling upon men's heads, but it introduces all good. It not only strips off the poisoned robe, it also invests with a royal garb. It is not only negatively the withdrawal from the power, and the setting above the reach, of all evil, in the widest sense of that word, physical and moral, but also the endowment with every good, in the widest sense of that word, physical and moral, which man is capable of receiving, or God has wealth to bestow.

2. *It is an accomplished salvation.*—Salvation is a Divine act completed, but regarded as continuous and permanent in its issues. The Revised Version slightly modifies the translation of the Authorized Version and reads, "ye have been saved" (A.V. "are saved"). The saving was a fact, finished, rounded, completed, realized once for all. In an earlier Epistle St. Paul said, "We are saved by hope." Despair means death. But here the saving is a fact and a process. It is done and it continues until man obtains the beatitude of God. Out there swims the lifeboat. The man may be lifted into it from the devouring waves, and you say he is saved. But leaving him there in the open boat, tempest-tossed, wind-driven, you expose him to death as certain, though more slow-footed. And so the saving of man, though the work of God, is a process that goes on till the boat reaches the eternal shore, and we step on to the firm land to realize the larger freedom and the diviner end.

3. *It is the gift of God.*—Salvation is entirely God's gift to us; and it must be so. For we cannot make it or get it for ourselves; we have no power of our own to make it for ourselves,

nothing of our own to offer in exchange for it. If our salvation does not come to us as God's free gift, it can never come to us at all. This is what St. Paul keeps insisting upon over and over again in his statements of the doctrine of justification; it is the foundation upon which the whole doctrine has to be reared. And so the very first step in the way of our salvation must be taken by God Himself; we can have nothing at all to do with it.

¶ "Not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." This word has often been misunderstood, as if it referred to the faith which is mentioned just before. But that is a plain misconception of the Apostle's meaning. It is not faith that is the gift of God; it is salvation by grace. That is plain from the next verse: "not of works, lest any man should boast." What is it that is "not of works"? Faith? Certainly not. Nobody would ever have thought it worth while to say, "Faith is *not* of works," because nobody would have said it *was*. The two clauses necessarily refer to the same thing; and if the latter of them must refer to salvation by grace, so must the former.[1]

¶ Alas! many don't understand the nature of Christianity, which is one great giving from beginning to end. Christ, God's Son, was a gift. The salvation He has procured us is a gift. The sacrifice which got that salvation is a gift. Heaven, with all its eternal felicities, is a gift—a free, a full, a perfect gift. And yet for Christ's cause there are men who can, and who will. do nothing! It is astonishing the forms, the methods, the excuses which people will sometimes adopt—people with wealth—to get off from giving to God a little of what God has given so lavishly to them.[2]

II.

The Source of Salvation.

"By grace."

1. The fountain of all our deliverance from sin lies in the deep heart of God, from which it wells up undrawn, unmotived, uncaused by anything except His own infinite loving-kindness. People have often presented the New Testament teaching about

[1] A. Maclaren, *Creed and Conduct*, 37.

[2] Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthberts, in *Life* by Frances Balfour, 44.

salvation as if it implied that God's love was brought to man because Jesus Christ died, and *turned* the Divine affections. That is not New Testament teaching. Christ's death is not the cause of God's love, but God's love is the cause of Christ's death. "*God* so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son." When He loves, He loves freely and unmodified except by the constraint of His own Being. Just as the light, because it is light and must radiate, falls upon dung-hills and diamonds, upon black rocks and white snow, upon ice-peaks and fertile fields, so the great fountain of the Divine grace pours out upon men only by reason of its own continual tendency to communicate its own fullness and blessedness.

¶ "Grace" is a word our fathers understood and loved better than we. It was defined as "favour." And favours even of God are not agreeable to the proud spirit of man. But no common term can ever exhaust, or express, this great and rich idea. "Grace" expresses and denotes at once the feeling that prompts the favour and the gratitude the favour begets. It denotes both the beneficence that comes of a joy that cannot be uttered, and yet must be expressed, and the joy that cannot bear the sight of pain and misery, and guilt and death, confronting it on this wide earth.[1]

¶ Do you know what it is to be impressed by a word? Lately, the word *grace*, especially as used in Galatians, has come to me morning, noon, and night, with a fullness of meaning it never had before. What an infinite mercy it is that salvation from beginning to end is *by grace*! How useless and how needless to look anywhere for merit, and how simple just to take! This has a commonplace look now it is written, and yet it has meant so much to me.[2]

¶ There is another term that stands near "grace"—the term "love." But the two terms are worlds apart. All grace is love, but not all love is grace. Grace loves to do good in an equal measure to all; but love can never dispense with a fit object. Grace is a thing of nature so infinite that no man who has it dare resist or disobey its command. The beautiful spirit incarnated in beautiful speech is gracious. The gracefulness which is the delight of gods and men comes from the loveliness of perfect deeds. There is a grace which corresponds to the word of the old philosopher, "The best and the last part of beauty is grace." Grace has been called beauty in motion, beauty in action. God

[1] A. M. Fairbairn, in *The Preacher's Magazine*, January 1909, p. 8.
[2] John Brash, in *Memorials and Correspondence*, 9.

is gracious by the nature He bears as Deity. But man is gracious by gift. The beneficence of God creates grace in man. But a heathen man could have spoken of grace in some such terms as we have used. St. Paul, however, took the term, made it Christian, baptized it, and lifted it into a new and splendid sense. It meant to him absolute freedom in all that God gave. God is no infinite creditor, and we are no infinite debtors. Grace cannot be bought, not even by blood; for He who is gracious gave to the death the Son of His love. See, then, grace is free, sending the Son to make that glorious sacrifice whereby we are all redeemed. Because grace is free it is given without fee, merit, or reward. Only the mercy of God, only the grace of heaven, only the free unfettered love of the Father, can save men.[1]

2. Through universal grace, all walls of partition fall down, and men stand alike and equal before God. Before St. Paul's day men appended God to a race, a priesthood, a sacrifice. They read God through what they did, and through themselves alone. But St. Paul read man through God. He read history through heaven. St. Paul brought the great and splendid conception of grace to vivify all that man signified, and all that he could achieve. Can you think what was done when, instead of coming to God with all the terror of soul that seeks to buy His grace, and to pay Him in blood, and by pain and suffering have merit before Him, men came to Him simply because of His infinite mercy? Did you ever think that what happened then was that men, instead of coming to God as an infinite power whose pity they must buy, looked at mankind through God's own eyes? The eyes of grace brought to the interpretation of man the great and glorious dream of an Eternal and Universal Father who could not will but save. He is a grand King who is the Father of His people, and the grandest of all discoveries was made by the Apostle when he said, Not by might, not by any merit of our own, not by any works, but altogether of grace is God's great action. When he said this, down fell the wall of partition, down came every act which divided and distinguished men. Where God is gracious, men who through His grace are saved become one mankind.

¶ Grace is given for the merits of Christ all over the earth; there is no corner, even of Paganism, where it is not present, present in each heart of man in real sufficiency for his ultimate

[1] A. M. Fairbairn.

salvation. Not that the grace presented to each is such as at once to bring him to heaven; but it is sufficient for a beginning. It is sufficient to enable him to plead for other grace; and that second grace is such as to impetrate a third grace; and thus the soul may be led from grace to grace, and from strength to strength, till at length it is, so to say, in very sight of heaven, if the gift of perseverance does but complete the work.[1]

¶ The play of chances which brings up a ternion or a quaternion is nothing compared to what has been required to prevent the combination of which I am reaping the fruits from being disturbed. If my origin had been less lowly in the eyes of the world, I should not have entered or persevered upon that royal road of the intellectual life to which my early training for the priesthood attached me. The displacement of a single atom would have broken the chain of fortuitous facts which, in the remote district of Brittany, was preparing me for a privileged life; which brought me from Brittany to Paris; which, when I was in Paris, took me to the establishment of all others where the best and most solid education was to be had; which, when I left the seminary, saved me from two or three mistakes which would have been the ruin of me; which, when I was on my travels, extricated me from certain dangers that, according to the doctrine of chances, would have been fatal to me; which, to cite one special instance, brought Dr. Suquet over from America to rescue me from the jaws of death which were yawning to swallow me up. The only conclusion I would fain draw from all this is that the unconscious effort towards what is good and true in the universe has its throw of the dice through the intermediary of each one of us. There is no combination but what comes up, quaternions like any other. We may disarrange the designs of Providence in respect to ourselves; but we have next to no influence upon their accomplishment. *Quid habes quod non accepisti?* The dogma of grace is the truest of all the Christian dogmas.[2]

III.

The Channel of Salvation.

"Through faith."

1. Faith is the condition of salvation on man's side. The Christian requirement of the condition of salvation is expressed

[1] Newman, *Difficulties felt by Anglicans*, 70.

[2] E. Renan, *Recollections of My Youth*, 326

in the word "faith." "Ye have been saved *by* grace"—there is the source; "ye have been saved by grace, *through* faith"—there is the condition, the medium, the instrument, the channel. It is a thousand pities, one sometimes thinks, that the word was not translated "trust" instead of "faith," and then we should have understood that it is not a theological virtue at all, but just the common thing that we all know so well, which is the cement of human society and the blessedness of human affection, and which only needs to be lifted, as a plant that had been running along the ground, and had its tendrils bruised and its fruit marred, might be lifted and twined round the pillar of God's throne, in order to grow up and bear fruit that shall be found after many days unto praise, and honour and glory.

¶ There is something on our side, by means of which we are to accept the salvation, and if that something be not exercised salvation may be brought to our doors but it will not do us any good. You may bring the biggest nugget of gold in the world to my door; there it may be outside on a wheelbarrow, and I may be inside dying of starvation; the nugget will do me no good if I do not take it in. If I do not turn it into money, and apply it to the satisfaction of my wants, I shall be as badly off as if the nugget had never been presented to me at all. The glorious gift of salvation is brought to our doors, and the question is, Have we taken it into our hearts?[1]

¶ Faith is as distinctive of man as grace is distinctive of God, for this reason—while grace describes God's attitude to man, faith describes man's attitude to God. While grace speaks of the relation of the ideal to man, faith speaks of the relation of man to the ideal. Hence all faith speaks of man in relation to God. Where His grace works our good, our faith responds to His grace. The one is the answer to the other—the response of earth to the voice that speaks from heaven.[2]

¶ We got, I forget how, to the subject of the Divine permission of Evil, which Wordsworth said he had always felt the hardest problem of man's being. When four years old, he had quaked on his bed in sharp conflict of spirit on this subject. "Nothing," he said, "but Faith can keep you quiet and at peace with such awful problems pressing on you—Faith that what you know not now, you will know in God's good time. It is curious, in that verse of St. Paul's about Faith, Hope, and Charity or

[1] W. H. M. H. Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, 119. [2] A. M. Fairbairn.

Love, that Charity should be placed the highest of the three; it must be because it is so universal and limitless in its operations: but Faith is the highest individual experience, because it conquers the pride of the understanding—man's greatest foe.[1]

2. Why is faith selected as the channel of salvation?

(1) Faith has been selected as the channel of grace because *there is a natural adaptation in faith to be used as the receiver.* Suppose that I am about to give a poor man an alms; I put it into his hand—why? Well, it would hardly be fitting to put it into his ear, or to lay it upon his foot; the hand seems made on purpose to receive. So faith in the mental frame is created on purpose to be a receiver; it is the hand of the man, and there is a fitness in bestowing grace by its means. Faith which receives Christ is as simple an act as when your child receives an apple from you, because you hold it out, and promise to give him the apple if he comes for it. The belief and the receiving relate only to an apple; but they make up precisely the same act as the faith which deals with eternal salvation; and what the child's hand is to the apple, that your faith is to the perfect salvation of Christ. The child's hand does not make the apple, or alter the apple, it only takes it; and faith is chosen by God to be the receiver of salvation, because it does not pretend to make salvation or to help in it, but it receives it.

(2) *It gives all the glory to God.*—The hand which receives charity does not say, "I am to be thanked for accepting the gift"; that would be absurd. When the hand conveys bread to the mouth, it does not say to the body, "Thank me, for I feed you." It is a very simple thing that the hand does, though a very necessary thing; and it never arrogates glory to itself for what it does. So God has selected faith to receive the unspeakable gift of His grace, because it cannot take to itself any credit, but must adore the gracious God who is the giver of all good.

(3) *It unites man to God.*—When man confides in God, there is a point of union between them, and that union guarantees blessing. Faith saves us because it makes us cling to God, and so brings us into connexion with Him. Years ago, above certain great falls, a boat was upset, and two men were being carried down the current, when persons on the shore managed to float a

[1] H. N. Pym, *Caroline Fox, Her Journals and Letters*, i. 305.

rope out to them, which rope was seized by them both. One of them held fast to it, and was safely drawn to the bank; but the other, seeing a great log come floating by, unwisely let go the rope, and clung to the log, for it was the bigger thing of the two, and apparently better to cling to. Alas! the log, with the man on it, went right over the vast abyss, because there was no union between the log and the shore. The size of the log was no benefit to him who grasped it; it needed a connexion with the shore to produce safety. So, when a man trusts to his works, or to sacraments, or to anything of that sort, he will not be saved, because there is no junction between him and Christ; but faith, though it may seem to be like a slender cord, is in the hand of the great God on the shore side; infinite power pulls in the connecting line, and thus draws the man from destruction.

(4) *Faith touches the springs of action.*—If I walk across a room, it is because I believe my legs will carry me. A man eats because he believes in the necessity of food. Columbus discovered America because he believed that there was another continent beyond the ocean. Many another grand deed has also been born of faith, for faith works wonders. Commoner things are done on the same principle; faith in its natural form is an all-prevailing force. God gives salvation to our faith, because He has thus touched the secret spring of all our emotions and actions. He has, so to speak, taken possession of the battery, and now He can send the sacred current to every part of our nature. When we believe in Christ, and the heart has come into the possession of God, then are we saved from sin, and are moved towards repentance, holiness, zeal, prayer, consecration, and every other gracious thing.

¶ The next day I again went to Farringford. I found Tennyson walking up and down the ballroom. I walked up and down with him for three-quarters of an hour. After talking of various matters, he came back to the subject of immortality. "It is hard," he said, "to believe in God, but it is harder not to believe in Him. I don't believe in His goodness from what I see in nature. In nature I see the mechanism. I believe in His goodness from what I find in my own breast." . . . Then he said, "I wonder what the earliest Christians thought of it all." I said that I thought that they were content with seeing in Christ a revelation of God and an assurance of God's love; later came the

controversies and the need for definition. He said that, of course, we must have doctrine. I assented, remarking that the form must be more or less human. "After all," he said, "after all, the greatest thing is faith." Having said this, he paused, and then recited, giving earnest emphasis to the long rolling lines which sang of a faith victorious, a faith which can wait till the opening doors of Heaven disclose what faith waits for:—

Doubt no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the best,
Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope or break thy rest,
Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the shipwreck, or the rolling
Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the famine, or the pest

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than the heart's desire!
Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of what is higher.
Wait till Death has flung them open, when the man will make the Maker
Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare of deathless fire![1]

3. The entire system of salvation revealed in the Gospel is based upon this foundation doctrine, that the faith which saves the soul is a faith which looks immediately to, and which terminates definitively in, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the almighty and atoning Redeemer. Now, it is of exceeding importance to have a clear and distinct understanding of this cardinal doctrine, that, in order to salvation, there must be a personal faith in a Personal Saviour. Wrong views here are ruinous. Any mistake as to the object of faith is fatal error. Yet there may be and there is a belief of the truth of Scripture which is not faith in the New Testament and saving sense of the term. There may be a belief of all that God has revealed in His Word, and even an intellectual apprehension of the remedial scheme as set forth in the Gospel, altogether apart from that faith which is connected with the elements of spiritual life and the

[1] Bishop W. Boyd Carpenter, *Some Pages of My Life*, 269.

earnest of salvation. And the explanation of this is to be found in the nature of the case. The object of saving faith is not the truth about Christ, but the Person of Christ; it is not the testimony, but the Testifier. Of course there must of necessity be the believing of the truth about Christ, the crediting of the testimony given in the Word concerning Him. But what is the relation which the truth and the testimony bear to Christ? Why, the truth is but the light under which He is revealed; the testimony is only the platform on which He is exhibited. And what is the relation which faith bears to the truth and the testimony about Christ? Why, faith eyes Christ as He is seen by the light of the truth; it occupies itself with Him as He is set forth in the testimony. But faith is not satisfied with the mere speculative knowledge and the certified evidence of Christ's Saviourhood. Faith breaks through all his Scripture surroundings and presses forward to Christ Himself, and finds its proper focus and fruition in the Person of the revealed and realized Saviour.

¶ As Dr. Liddon so moved among his fellow-men, so thought of them and approached them, he seemed as one who was often thinking of the gaze of Christ lighting on him, the Hand of Christ pointing to some act of service, the Voice of Christ prompting some witness to the Faith. There was a memorable tone that came into his words when in preaching or in argument or in conversation he spoke of that which he condemned as slighting or disloyal to Christ. It was, quite simply, like the way in which a man fires up when any one has, even unawares, spoken rudely or contemptuously of his friend; and there are parts of his writings in which, for those at least who knew him, that same tone still sounds. It was but one sign of a real habit of thinking constantly of his Master; of a very attentive listening for His command; of an earnest, anxious desire to go straight forward in His cause, to live and die as His.[1]

[1] J. O. Johnston, *Life and Letters of H. P. Liddon*, 403.

God's Workmanship.

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God's Workmanship.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.—Eph. ii. 10.

This chapter contains an argument which is a good illustration of the two-edged way in which the sword of the Spirit cuts enemies who come from different directions. On the one hand, St. Paul strikes at those who would teach that licentiousness is possible to men who are saved by grace. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for *good works.* It is true that we do not improve ourselves. It is all of grace, yet good works are binding upon us all the more. On the other hand, let us not take any credit to ourselves. If we are elevated or refined, it is because God has taken pains with us; otherwise we should be as coarse and foul as any one. Indeed, we should never have come into the workshop but for the heavenly artist. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It is, as old Mr. Honest said, when the rest of the pilgrims came to watch him cross the river, "Grace reigns."

The teaching of St. Paul, then, is that men and women are not the sole architects of their own characters; the Supreme Architect who works upon them is God. We are saved by grace—by a long series of Divine interpositions, by Heavenly compulsions and impulsions, by the energies of a ceaseless Hand that works upon us and brings out the Heavenly design, and completes the Divine symmetry. It is easy, of course, to turn such a thought into folly. Human nature is, unfortunately, so constituted that very few minds are capable of seeing both sides of the truth. Thus it happens that those who cling most to the consoling thought of a gospel of pure grace often neglect the equally binding gospel of a ceaseless struggle after goodness. And again, the good people who build up a life of flawless honour, integrity, and virtue, often

find, because they have not learned to need it, a gospel of grace incomprehensible. Yet both are true, just as it is true that a ship depends for its movement equally on the men who work the pulleys and on the wind that fills the sails. So we work out our own salvation; but we move to no heavenly shores till the wind comes out of the waste heaven, and God touches us. For it is by grace, by a Divine interference, that we are saved; nor is salvation possible without it.

¶ It was the supreme truth of God's free grace that converted both Luther and Wesley. The one rose from Pilate's staircase in Rome with the dawn upon his brow, as a man enfranchised of a new world; the other in Aldersgate Street in half-an-hour cast the husk of twenty years of ritualism, and emerged into unbounded spiritual liberty. For us also to grasp this truth is life. Yet so ill-balanced and frail of judgment are we that there is only too much peril of wresting such a truth to our destruction. Rather for us the most necessary truth to-day is that goodness can be found only by effort, that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, that God will not save us by any spiritual necromancy, that if we are not prepared to be as earnest over religion as we are over our worldly affairs, there is no religion and no salvation for us.[1]

¶ "Hamlet," says Professor Bradley, "usually speaks as one who accepts the received Christian ideas, yet when he meditates profoundly he seems to ignore them." There has been too much of this Hamlet-spirit in the Church. Yet her shortcomings have only thrown into more brilliant relief the quenchless patience of God's love, and the tenacity of His revelation. The vital truths of the faith have refused to be ignored for long. It has been a revelation to the world, as well as to the Church itself, how vital and undying is the sheer grace of God in Christ, often thwarted, often grieved, but never chilled by human imperfections.[2]

I.

A Divine Creation.

"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

1. The term rendered "workmanship" signifies "a poem," and the idea is, that as a poem owes its conception to the singer's

[1] W. J. Dawson, *The Divine Challenge*, 107.
[2] J. Moffatt, *Reasons and Reasons*, 28.

intellect and fancy, so a believer in Christ owes his character and standing to God. We are indebted to the Greeks for the word, and for its beautiful meaning. A poem with them was, first, anything made; but as beauty and harmony are elements in all truly original or created works, the word "poem" came to be applied more and more exclusively to the expression of truth and beauty in rhythmical form.

¶ Only in one other place does the word occur in the New Testament. That place is Romans, chapter i. verse 20; and there the Apostle uses it with reference to the wonders of creation. This bright and beautiful world in which we live is full of God's poetical works. "The heavens are telling the glory of God;" the starry sky, with the sun and moon, is not only a Divine poem, but also an oratorio, full of celestial harmonies. The little islands are the poetry of the sea. Gems and precious stones, such as the diamond and the emerald, are the poetry of the mineral kingdom. Flowers are the poetry of the vegetable kingdom. The young ones of living creatures are the poetry of the animal kingdom. Children are God's poetical works in the world of mankind; we remember the lines which Longfellow addresses to them—

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.[1]

¶ "We are His poem!" Each Christian age has been a canto of it; each Christian life and death a word. Its strains have been pealing down the centuries, and "though set to a tune which admits of such endless variations that it is often difficult to detect the original melody amid the clash of the chords that conceal it,

[1] C. Jerdan, *Manna for Young Pilgrims*, 102.

it will eventually be resolved, through many a swift modulation and startling cadence, back to the perfect key." [1]

¶ Biographers of Wordsworth have marked the exact period when his genius reached its height, and after that the glory came only at intervals, and the real poems were rare. And because a true poem is so rare a thing, it has always been appraised as the highest form of literature. Many great books come—and go; but a true poem is as fresh after long centuries as when it was first written. "Poesy never waxeth old," and knows no decay. It knows no decay because it is permeated with the spirit of beauty; because it is the enduring monument of a combination of fine gifts, whose final result is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. That is what a poem is, and St. Paul says that we are the expression of the mind of God, as the *In Memoriam* is the expression of the full mind and heart of Tennyson. We are *God's Poems.* [2]

If thou hadst been a poet! On my heart
The thought flashed sudden, burning through the weft
Of life, and with too much I sank bereft.
Up to my eyes the tears, with sudden start,
Thronged blinding: then the veil would rend and part!
The husk of vision would in twain be cleft!
Thy hidden soul in naked beauty left,
I should behold thee, Nature, as thou art!
O poet Jesus! at thy holy feet
I should have lien, sainted with listening;
My pulses answering ever, in rhythmic beat,
The stroke of each triumphant melody's wing,
Creating, as it moved, by being sweet;
My soul thy harp, thy word the quivering string.[3]

2. The poem depends entirely upon the poet for its creation. It is the unveiling of the deepest and most intimate secrecies of his heart. His own image is projected over every page, and it is the poignant personal element in poetry that makes it so beautiful, and gives it its enduring charm. Men, then, are God's poems. The intimacies of God's heart are expressed in man—God's highest thoughts, God's deepest emotions. The prayer of Moses was that the beauty of God might rest upon him. When a man is finished at last in the likeness of Christ, God's sense of beauty is

[1] H. G. Miller, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 93.
[2] W. J. Dawson, *The Divine Challenge*, 111.
[3] George MacDonald, "Concerning Jesus" (*Poetical Works*, i. 255).

satisfied in him, God's art has found its finest expression and the beauty of God does rest upon him. The true Christian is God's poem in a world of prose, God's beauty in a world of gloom, God's fine and finished art in a world where men forget beauty, and are careless of moral symmetry and spiritual grace.

¶ There is no bioplasm in the spiritual world. By no means or contrivance can a soul live the life of God without the direct interposition of the Holy Spirit. You may galvanize a dead bird into a flutter, but there is no life in a galvanic shock. The Gospel, which is such a rich exhibition of pathos, beauty, and prospect, when its truths are naturally presented, may create emotion, but it cannot give the new heart by outward experiment. Life comes from life, and not from declarations of truths. We may touch and move the external nature, but God alone can give the new life.[1]

¶ I remember once seeing a little fountain playing in the room of a house in which I was staying. I went near to examine it and heard the click and whirr of machinery! The fountain was the product of a mechanical contrivance; it went by clockwork. It was wound up and played for a little while and then sank into stagnancy again. How different from the spring! One plays in feverish spasms; the other flows in restful persistence. "Not of works": that is the manufactured fountain. "We are his workmanship": that is the life of the spring. The Christian life is quietly natural; it is the creation of the ceaseless energy of God.[2]

3. The new creation is "in Christ Jesus." One of the earliest and most majestic names of God is Maker, Creator. The Psalmist says, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me." We wear the image of the earthly Adam by our natural descent, and in this sense we are the creatures of God. But the first creation has been marred, and we need to be created again by being brought into connexion, relationship, and union with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. We are created in Christ Jesus.

Now, if every Christian is a true poem of God, and if the Holy Catholic Church is the supreme Divine epic "created" in our world, who is the Hero of the composition? Our text answers

[1] T. Davies, *Sermons*, ii. 116.

[2] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, Nov. 19, 1903, p. 508.

that the Hero is the Lord Jesus Christ. The poem is full of Him. God's people are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." This Hero is both Divine and human. He is the Son of God and the Flower of men, and also the one Mediator between God and us. God has purchased the Church, and every individual member of it, with His own blood. The Church is Christ's body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." His Spirit dwells in the heart of every believer. His glory fills the entire Society of His people. Every poem of which He is the Hero shall spread His name and His fame throughout the universe to all eternity.[1]

¶ In every great poem there is a definite subject, a leaping thought, or a hero around whom everything gathers. The central figure of Homer's *Iliad* is Achilles, a typical Greek—handsome, brave, passionate, hospitable, affectionate. The hero of the *Odyssey* is the wandering Ulysses, also an ideal Grecian of the Homeric age. The hero of Virgil's *Æneid* is "the pious Æneas," a famous Trojan, one of the principal figures of classical legend. Dante's *Commedia* is the great poem of retribution, his own figure dominating the whole of it. The outstanding personality in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is Satan, while that in *Paradise Regained* is Jesus of Nazareth. The hero of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is King Arthur of the Round Table, or, as some would have it, Sir Lancelot of the Lake.[2]

II.

The Practical End.

"For good works."

1. St. Paul indicates in one brief phrase the right relation of good works to the Christian life. It is "for good works" that we are created in Christ. Or, to put it otherwise, good works, holiness, Godlike character, are the aim of God in creating us afresh. They are His ultimate goal; accordingly they cannot be the cause of our being saved, but must be its issue and consequence. They are the fruit of the good tree, not its root or vital sap; and we are said to be created for good works just as a tree is created, or exists, for its fruit. Hence the true relation is altogether distorted and reversed when character and conduct are

[1] C. Jerdan, *Manna for Young Pilgrims*, 105. [2] *Ibid.* 104

made pre-conditions of our obtaining Divine grace, instead of the joyous result of our having accepted it.

¶ This is a problem exactly parallel to that of slave labour. If the end of labour be taken as the maximum of production, then the question history had to solve was this, How is this end attained most effectively ?—by slave labour or by free? In Greece, in Rome, in our own dependencies a hundred years ago, an unhesitating answer was given in favour of slavery; yet emancipation had only to become a fact to prove that, even from the economic point of view, freedom was inestimably the more advantageous of the two. So is it also in religion. Let men believe that they must purchase salvation by hard, grim toil, as the mere bond-slaves of God, and their hands will sink in weakness and despair. But tell them that in Christ Jesus they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and grateful love and wonder will evoke a beauty and a wealth of goodness of which else they had vainly dreamed.[1]

¶ Wordsworth has described in a memorable and familiar passage the history of human life as it is developed under the influence of the world, the sum of external and transitory things.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

This description of the experience of the growing child is the exact reverse of the truth in regard to the life "in Christ." The

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 55.

fresh rays of glory which the boy sees about him do not "fade" or "die away" with advancing years, but, as his power of vision is strengthened and disciplined by continuous use, are seen to spread from point to point with undimmed lustre, till at last all Nature is flooded with the heavenly splendour. The solitary star is found to be the quickening sun. Love for the Ascended Christ continually calls forth fresh and more glorious manifestations of His Person and will (John xiv. 23).

Life "in Christ" is, in other words, a progressive realization of a personal fellowship with God in thought, word and deed, which brings an ever-increasing power of discerning Him in His works and a surer faith by which we apprehend the invisible (Heb. xi. 1). Thus the Christian appropriates in action little by little what has been done once for all, and gladly recognizes "the good works, which God afore prepared that [he] should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). He is himself God's "workmanship" and his character is a reflection of the living Christ, gained in the common business of life as he places himself before His open presence (2 Cor. iii. 18).[1]

2. The Christian life is always metrical, beating in harmony with the will of God. It is in religion as in music. Nature is full of musical voices, of simple notes that sound melodiously in every ear; but out of these the cultured and quickened imagination of the master can create harmonies such as Nature never has created or can create—can in his Oratorio weave sounds into symphonies so wondrous that they seem like the speech of the gods suddenly breaking articulate upon the ear of man, speaking of passions, hopes, fears, joys too tumultuous and vast for the human tongue to utter; or opening and interpreting for mortals a world where, remote from discord or dissonance, thought and being move as to the stateliest music. So in the spiritual sphere the truly holy religious person is the master spirit, making audible to others the harmonies his imagination is the first to hear. In him the truths and ideas of God, as yet indistinctly seen or partially heard by the multitude, are embodied, become as it were incarnate and articulate, assume a visible and strenuous form that they may inspire men to nobler deeds, and show them how to create a higher manhood and purer society.

¶ Professor Gilbert Murray writes of the Greeks that "the

[1] B. F. Westcott, *Christian Aspects of Life*, 24.

idea of service to the community was more deeply rooted in them than in us, and that they asked of their poets first of all this question: 'Does he help to make men better? Does he make life a better thing?'" These were the questions that Signor (Mr. Watts) asked himself daily and hourly. I remember how pleased he was when Verestchagin agreed heartily with his aphorism, "Art should be used to make men better."[1]

¶ Tennyson, in one of his earlier poems, gives his conception of the place and work of the true poet:

> The poet in a golden clime was born,
> With golden stars above;
> Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love.
>
> He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
> He saw thro' his own soul.
> The marvel of the everlasting will,
> An open scroll,
>
> Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
> The secretest walks of fame:
> The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
> And wing'd with flame.

The poet, says another, is the writer who pours forth his thought and inner life in the melody of metre, and under the inspiration and power of a Divine emotion. Poetry, like all creation, is self-revelation. It is the highest form of expression. In literature the imperial minds worthy of the name poet are few. The Hebrew race had but one David, the Greek but one Homer, the Italian but one Dante, the German but one Goethe, the English but one Shakespeare.[2]

¶ In your concord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. And do ye, each and all, form yourselves into a chorus, that being harmonious in love and having taken the scale (or keynote) of God, ye may in unison sing with one voice through Jesus Christ unto the Father, that He may both hear you and acknowledge you by your good deeds to be members of His Son.[3]

¶ When Carlyle describes Elizabeth Fry standing fair as a lily, in pure womanliness, amid the abominable sights of old

[1] Mrs. Watts, in *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 279.
[2] A. Lewis, *Sermons Preached in England*, 125.
[3] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians.*

Newgate; or Longfellow describes Florence Nightingale moving with her lamp among the wounded at Scutari—

> And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
> The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
> Her shadow, as it falls
> Upon the darkening walls—

what is the effect on the mind? It is the effect of poetry. We feel touched, purged, exalted: we know that these women were in truth God's poems. And there are men and women in the world still who touch the soul by the same Divine magic.[1]

III.

A Comprehensive Design.

"Which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

1. God's great plan includes the Christian life and all its conditions. By the revelation of the moral law He has already fixed the pathway of the believer's obedience, and by creating us in Christ, He fits us by disposition and aptitude for that obedience. For each of us a path of spiritual development has been prepared beforehand, our travelling by which will be the realization of the Divine ideal of our life which has hovered before the mind of God from the beginning. For every life God has a plan that touches the details as well as the great issues of the life, and there comes into the life of the believer nothing unknown to God. There are certain words that we make use of very often. We say that a certain contingency has arisen, an exigency, a combination of circumstances, that such and such a thing happened. All those words may be very necessary when we are talking about our own arrangements and our own outlook upon life, but they find no place in the vocabulary of God. There is no contingency that can surprise or startle Him, no exigency that He does not see; no detail of a human life is enshrouded in the mystery of an unborn hour so that God cannot detect it.

[1] W. J. Dawson, *The Divine Challenge*, 113.

¶ I think, as I look back over my life, that there is hardly a single thwarting of my wishes, hardly a single instance where things seemed to go against me, in which I cannot even now see, that by God's profound mercy they really went for me all the while; so that if I could have looked forward only so far as the time now present I should have longed for and welcomed all those things which I have feared and grudgingly accepted. . . . There is nothing that God does not work up into His perfect plan of our lives: all lines converge, all movements tend to do His will, on earth as in Heaven.[1]

2. God, who does nothing vainly or at random, delights in that which is individual; He prepares us for the pathway of good works because He has also prepared the pathway for us; the two have originated together in His mind. It has been chosen for us, as a fitting stage to educe and develop our special powers; we have been created for it, and therefore endowed with the powers it will call for. Men differ in gifts and aptitudes as infinitely as do the leaves of a tree in form and texture; and one of the beautiful and inspiring thoughts that lie, like precious grains of gold, beneath the surface of this text, is the message that God has His own ideal for each one of us, and therefore would have us manifest the Christ-like and Christ-nourished life each in his own way. God keeps no set moulds into which character must run; rather the mould is broken after the emergence of each new life. For each the end of the journey is the same, when we shall all come to the measure of Christ's fullness; but one may approach the far-shining summit up a gentle slope, soft with grass and deep with flowers, another over morass and torrent, and at last along the flinty way where the tender feet are bruised, and the wind blows keen across the snow. It matters little, if only we tread the ordained pathway of God.

¶ Mrs. Josephine Butler, for whose heroism he had a deep veneration, was one of four women of mark whom Signor (Mr. Watts) wished to include in his series of portraits for the National Gallery. Her portrait was painted, and at Limnerslease, where she came to stay with us. Very lovely in her youth, in age her delicate sensitive nature still gave true beauty to a face that bore but too plainly the marks of an heroic crusade. When she saw the portrait for the first time she said but a few words. She left

[1] *Francis Paget, Bishop of Oxford*, 49.

the room and went to take the rest which at intervals was now necessary for her. Before she came downstairs to dinner she had written what she had not been able to say to Signor:—

"When I looked at that portrait which you have just done, I felt inclined to burst into tears. I will tell you why. I felt so sorry for her. Your power has brought up out of the depths of the past, the record of a conflict which no one but God knows of. It is written in the eyes, and whole face. Your picture has brought back to me all that I suffered, and the sorrows through which the Angel of God's presence brought me out alive. I thank you that you have not made that poor woman look severe or bitter, but only sad, and yet purposeful. For with full purpose of heart she has borne and laboured, and she is ready to go down to Hades again, if it were necessary, for the deliverance of her fellow-creatures. But God does not require that descent more than once. I could not say all this aloud. But if the portrait speaks with such truth and power to me, I think it will in some way speak to others also."[1]

¶ Some time ago, when in Manchester, I saw men at work pulling down whole streets of houses to make room for a new railway station. All appeared ruin and disorder. Here was a party digging out foundations; in another place the bricklayers were building walls; elsewhere some were laying foundations for other walls; beyond them others were still pulling down. It seemed like chaos, and yet in the architect's office could be seen the elevation and picture of the complete whole. Every man was working to a plan. And so God has His elevation, but He does not show it. "It doth not yet appear." When Joseph was in jail, he was in the path of Providence, and the fetters of iron were as much part of the plan as the chain of gold he wore when brought to the summit of greatness.[2]

¶ To erect a great building, to paint a great picture, to carve a great statue, to compose a great oratorio, to write a great poem, requires a great theme, and to live a great life requires a great purpose. So we, God's poems, to fulfil our mission in the world, must have a great purpose. Gladstone, Wellington, Grant, Lincoln, Washington, Luther, Savonarola, Paul, were all men of purpose and noble ambition. Frances Willard, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, and Susanna Wesley were women of purpose, as have been all those who have accomplished anything worth the doing.[3]

[1] Mrs. Watts, in *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 250.
[2] T. Champness, *New Coins from Old Gold*, 86.
[3] A. Lewis, *Sermons Preached in England*, 143.

3. The sense of a high vocation will go far to redeem life from failure. Our consciousness of being in touch with God would be deepened if we would only recognize that He has prepared the specific enterprise and exercise of duty for us, and is ready to meet us face to face upon that line. Whatever love may be, it is dutiful; it assigns duties to others, and to itself. To ignore this truth is to miss one of the dimensions of His great love. To accept it is to reach a new degree of cheerfulness and effectiveness in our service of God and man. More than that, to believe "we are his workmanship" here because we are needed for some end of His own makes us aware of the wonderful precision and definiteness with which God uses the details of our individual lives to draw us into the destiny of our tie to Jesus Christ. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works. They are not irrelevant to our spiritual career any more than they were to His. If we understand anything of the moral energy which throbs in God's redeeming purpose, we shall grow more and more conscious that our duties are a vocation, and that they become for each of us a private interpretation of the great will of Love with its design and its demands.

¶ I have been reading Margaret Fuller's love letters. Sometimes the letters are light and frolicsome, glancing along the surface of things as a swallow skims the stream. At other times one is dropped sheer down into inconceivable depths. Here is a phrase which laid hold of me from these strange epistles. She is writing to the one she cared for and loved. "May God refine you and chasten you until the word of your life is fully spoken." "The word of your life!" As though every life was purposed to be some articulated word, clearly and fully spoken. It is only another way of saying that life is ordained to be a distinct and distinguished poem, expressing in some altogether peculiar way the mind and will of God.[1]

¶ Among the art treasures of Rome there is a mysterious unfinished statue. It represents a barbarian king in chains—one of those tall fair-haired men of the North—men of our own blood—who, even when they stood in captivity before their Roman conquerors, extorted admiration by their splendid physique and their royal dignity of bearing. The peculiarity of this statue is that it has never been finished. The work is wrought with great care and skill up to a certain point—then it suddenly stops short.

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, Nov. 19, 1903, p. 508.

Conjecture has been busy about the statue. Why did the sculptor stop, after having done so much? Was the reason caprice, or accident, or sudden death, or impatience at his failure to realize the ideal aimed at? Who can tell? The secret lies buried in a forgotten past. But He who labours at the chiselling of new men and women in Christ never loses patience, never tires of His task. Obstacles may delay, but they can never finally baffle His sublime purpose.[1]

There's heaven above, and night by night
I look right through its gorgeous roof;
No suns and moons though e'er so bright
Avail to stop me; splendour-proof
I keep the broods of stars aloof:
For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory, passed
I lay my spirit down at last.
I lie where I have always lain,
God smiles as he has always smiled;
Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
Ere stars were thunder-girt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me his child;
Ordained a life for me, arrayed
Its circumstances every one
To the minutest; ay, God said
This head, this hand should rest upon
Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.
And having thus created me,
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,
Guiltless for ever, like a tree
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know
The law by which it prospers so:
But sure that thought and word and deed
All go to swell his love for me,
Me, made because that love had need
Of something irreversibly
Pledged solely its content to be.[2]

¶ More than once in those long nights I spent on the Atlantic, I went on deck when all was still, and felt how insignificant a thing was man, in all that lonely immensity of sea and sky.

[1] Martin Lewis. [2] Browning, "Johannes Agricola in Meditation."

There was no sound save the cry of the wind among the spars, the throb of the great engines, the sound of the many waters rushing round the vessel's keel. I felt the mystery of life; I was conscious of "the whisper and moan and wonder and diapason of the sea." And then out of the stillness there came a voice, clear and ringing—the voice of the man on the look-out crying to the night, "All's well, and the lights burn bright! All's well, and the lights burn bright!" How did I know all was well? What knew I of the forces that were bridled in the mysterious throbbing heart of those unceasing engines, of the peril that glared on me in the breaking wave, or lay hidden in the dark cloud that lay along the horizon? I knew nothing; but the voice went sounding on over the sea: "All's well, and the lights burn bright!" And the wind carried it away across the waters, and it palpitated round the world, and it went up soaring and trembling, in ever fainter reverberations, among the stars. So I stand for a little while amid great forces of which I know little; but I am not alone in the empty night. The world moves on to some appointed goal, though by what paths I know not; it has its Steersman, and it will arrive. And, amid the loneliness and mystery, the peril and uncertainty, I have learned to hear a Voice that cries, "All's well!" and tells me why all is well; it is the Voice of Christ saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." God has not left His world. He is working out His supreme art in it every day, and if we be true Christians we are God's poems wrought in Christ Jesus unto good works.[1]

Lord, in my spirit, one by one
Thou dost repeat the wonders done
At Thy creative work begun.

When first I came from out the night,
The earliest sense that woke was sight,
And Thou didst say, "Let there be light."

I saw pass by Thy shining car;
I had no thought of near or far;
I tried to catch the bright day-star.

But when I found my strength was spent
The air with infant cries I rent,
And met therein my firmament,—

[1] W. J. Dawson, *The Divine Challenge*, 118.

I learned that distance vast divides
The river in the sky that glides
From ebb and flow of earthly tides.

Then grew I up from eve to morn,
With each beginning newly born,
Leaving each former stage forlorn.

First, as a plant of field I grew,
Unmindful of the winds that blew,
Unconscious that I nothing knew.

Next, with the cattle on the plain,
Bird of the air, fish of the main,
I rose to sense of joy and pain.

Then woke the spirit of the man,
With laws to bind, with hopes to fan,
With powers to say "I ought," "I can."

One stage remains to make me blest,
The brightest, loveliest, and the best;
My bosom must become Thy rest.

In vain from peak to peak I go,
If on the summit of pure snow
I cannot Thy communion know.

For bird of air and fish of sea
The earth was made a rest to be;
I came to be a rest to Thee.

Creation's Spirit most doth move,
And mightiest on the waters prove,
When life has found a home for Love.[1]

[1] George Matheson, *Sacred Songs*, 155.

The Commonwealth of Christ.

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF CHRIST.

So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.—Eph. ii. 19.

1. THESE words were addressed to Christians of Gentile birth who had been brought out of the darkness of paganism into Gospel light. The Apostle reminds them that in the days of their ignorance they had no part in God's promises or in the hope of Israel. They were separated by a great wall from the elect people. The Jews were God's household, and the Gentiles were outside. But now the cross of Jesus has broken down the dividing wall and brought Jew and Gentile together. The Heavenly light shines equally on the faces of both. Faith makes all races of one kin and kind. We are all alike fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

2. St. Paul had to labour strenuously and continuously against Jewish exclusiveness. The last thing that the Jews would think of was to admit the Gentiles to equal rights with themselves. One has smiled, rather sadly, to see men whose desperate eagerness to keep hold of some small privilege they had got was even exceeded by their desperate terror lest anybody else should get hold of anything like it. Now St. Paul set himself to put this selfish and jealous littleness down. So far, he has quite succeeded. For though human beings do yet try to keep worldly advantage and privilege to themselves, excluding others, it is ages since any professed Christian thought to keep God's grace or Christ's mercy so. Everybody knows that there is no more certain mark of really being within the Fold than the earnest desire that all we know and care for should be brought into it likewise. No Christian can even be imagined as desiring to keep this great possession to himself, or as grudging any human being his entrance. We have the believer's feeling

on this matter in memorable words once spoken by him who wrote this Epistle—words which, when and where they were said, combined well the grace which comes of high culture with the heartiness of Christian kindliness—"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

¶ I heard Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, speak recently about the great Puritans John Owen and Thomas Goodwin. He bade us read them; he told us of his own debt to them. "Thomas Goodwin and John Owen, and Richard Baxter and Matthew Henry, they are all upon my shelves. But not they alone! Side by side with the Puritans stand the works of great Catholics and great Anglicans. It is not with the Puritans alone I hold fellowship; I hold fellowship also with those other Christians between whom and the Puritans there seemed to be a great gulf fixed. I hold fellowship with Augustine, and pour out my soul in the words of his *Confessions*. I hold fellowship with A Kempis, while he teaches me the *Imitatio Christi*. I hold fellowship with William Law while he addresses to me his *Serious Call*, and with Jeremy Taylor while he discourses about *Holy Living and Holy Dying*. I hold fellowship with Newman and with Robertson, as I read their sermons—two men sundered far from each other, and both of them ecclesiastically separated from me. In my study every day of my life I enjoy the 'Communion of Saints.'"[1]

I.

The Disabilities of Aliens.

1. The Gentiles hitherto had been in the position of strangers and sojourners. As aliens they had no rights of citizenship, and all they could look for was temporary hospitality. They had no real standing within the commonwealth. Gentiles and Jews stood apart in their agelong traditions and customs. The Apostle has expressed in strong, emphatic language the ancient separation between the two. He has spoken of the Greeks as "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel,"—as those "that once were far off,"—of the "middle wall of partition" to be broken down; and no words could picture too strongly the great gulf that had divided these families of men. The descendant of Abraham—

[1] J. D. Jones, *Things Most Surely Believed*, 178.

conscious of the election of his race to stand alone among men, as the people of Jehovah; exulting in the noble train of lawgivers and prophets who had come forth from the secret place of God to proclaim the final glory of the Jew; trained to believe in one great Invisible, of whom there was no likeness "in the heaven above or in the earth beneath"—had learned to look with hatred or contempt on the outcast, lawless Gentile, with his image of God in every valley and on every hill. And the Greek—living as the free child of nature; having no law but the darkened light of conscience; feeling in heaven and earth to find the presence of an Infinite Beauty, whose Image he tried to carve in grace and majesty in snowy stone—had come to look with philosophic pride on the stern land of the Hebrew, and in philosophic scorn on his strange, exclusive loneliness. But not only were they at enmity with each other, they were both at enmity with God, and tried painfully by ceremony and sacrifice to avert His eternal wrath.

2. The chasm that divided the one from the other seemed almost impassable. There were deep and seemingly irreconcilable differences between them. Those differences did not vanish even when Jew and Gentile both turned Christian; they continued to subsist, as any reader of the New Testament may discover for himself. It is no exaggeration to say that there was, in the early days of Christianity, a Jewish Church and a Gentile Church. And yet "in Christ" the differences were solved, and Jew and Gentile might greet one another as brethren. "So then," cries the Apostle, exulting in the effects of the reconciling work of Christ, "ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

¶ The alienation of Gentiles from the Divine covenant was represented in the structure of the temple at Jerusalem by a beautifully worked marble balustrade, separating the outer from the inner court, upon which stood columns at regular intervals, bearing inscriptions, some in Greek and some in Latin characters, to warn aliens not to enter the holy place. One of the Greek inscriptions was discovered a few years ago, and is now to be read in the Museum of Constantinople. It runs thus: "No alien to pass within the balustrade round the temple and the enclosure. Whosoever shall be caught so doing must blame himself for the penalty of death which he will incur."[1]

[1] C. Gore, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 104.

II.

The Widening of the Commonwealth.

1. *Every race had looked forward to some hoped-for better society.*—The Jews had for generations, often with the fiercest impatience, expected the coming of the Messianic kingdom. The Greeks had been encouraged by their teachers and philosophers to aim at creating the perfect city and perfect state. Plato himself had not only written his wonderful book on the ideal Commonwealth, but had for a time acted as Prime Minister to a despot who was willing to make such laws as the Athenian statesman might suggest. The Spartans, the Athenians, and the Macedonians had each in turn tried to build up the ideal state, and the bloody and treacherous history of the Greeks in general is not without nobility when we watch it as a tragic effort at making a really Godlike state. Far more impressive than the Greek history had been the Roman patriotism and the Roman imperialism. This forced itself upon the world as something gigantic and irresistible, that bound together nations and religions the most diverse in one mighty whole. Here in the Roman empire that Stoic doctrine of the brotherhood of man spread far and wide, and made many hope that better things were in store.

2. *Christ came to found an ideal society.*—How did He do it? He selected a few men who had the faculty of believing. They were not men of great imagination, or talent, or culture. They were men who could believe in the unseen. These men He trained, until at last one of them uttered the faith that had been growing in the hearts of all, and said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Immediately Jesus saw that His long and arduous task was on the way to completion. He saw that He had in this little group of men the lever with which He would turn the world upside down. He was filled with exultation and delight. He was beginning already to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and He cried out, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah. . . . I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The great word was out now and the

great idea launched upon the world. One confused fisherman, with a few men of like mind of whom he was the leader, formed the solitary rock in the midst of a world of shifting sand, and upon this rock Jesus would build His Church—a society embodying His spirit, living according to His laws, steadfastly administering His principles to the whole world, little by little leavening the lump, the society of the meek who should inherit the earth!

The Roman Empire had in Paul's time gathered into a great unity the Asiatics of Ephesus, the Greeks of Corinth, the Jews of Palestine, and men of many another race; but grand and imposing as that great unity was, it was to Paul a poor thing compared with the oneness of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Asiatics of Ephesus, Greeks of Corinth, Jews of Palestine, and members of many another race could say, "Our citizenship is in heaven." The Roman Eagle swept over wide regions in her flight, but the Dove of Peace, sent forth from Christ's hand, travelled farther than she. As Paul says in the context, the Ephesians had been strangers, "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel," wandering like the remnants of some "broken clans," but now they are gathered in. That narrow community of the Jewish nation has expanded its bounds and become the mother-country of believing souls, the true "island of saints." It was not Rome that really made all peoples one, it was the weakest and most despised of her subject races.

¶ What the early Christians felt when they embraced Christ and joined the little churches in their own cities, was that they had become members of a new race, a new and heavenly community, which was their proper and eternal home. Until now they had thought themselves mere human beings, born into a very strange and often cruel world, without any definite or trustworthy knowledge as to their destiny, plagued with toil and hardship, disease and the fear of death. But now suddenly their whole perspective was altered. Instead of being citizens of this world they were citizens of heaven, and only sojourners and strangers in the earthly life. Instead of being units in a confused and wearisome life that soon went out into nothingness, they were members of a blessed and everlasting family of which God was the Father, and Jesus Christ the loving herald of His purposes.[1]

[1] N. H. Marshall.

¶ Foremost and grandest amid the teachings of Christ were these two inseparable truths—*There is but one God; all men are the sons of God*; and the promulgation of these two truths changed the face of the world, and enlarged the moral circle to the confines of the inhabited globe. To the duties of men towards the Family and Country were added duties towards Humanity. Man then learned that wheresoever there existed a human being, there existed a brother; a brother with a soul immortal as his own, destined like himself to ascend towards the Creator, and on whom he was bound to bestow love, a knowledge of the Faith, and help and counsel when needed.[1]

3. *Salvation comes to the individual through society.*—The salvation in the Bible is supposed usually to reach the individual through the community. God's dealings with us in redemption thus follow the lines of His dealings with us in our natural development. For man stands out in history as a "social animal." His individual development, by a Divine law of his constitution, is rendered possible only because he is first of all a member of some society, tribe, or nation, or state. Through membership in such a society alone, and through the submissions and limitations of his personal liberty which such membership involves, does he become capable of any degree of free or high development as an individual. This law, then, of man's nature appears equally in the method of his redemption. Under the old covenant it was to members of the "commonwealth of Israel" that the blessings of the covenant belonged. Under the new covenant St. Paul still conceives of the same commonwealth as subsisting and as fulfilling no less than formerly the same religious functions. True, it has been fundamentally reconstituted and enlarged to include the believers of all nations, and not merely one nation; but it is still the same commonwealth, or polity, or church; and it is still through the Church that God's "covenant" dealings reach the individual.

It is for this reason that St. Paul goes on to describe the state of the Asiatic Christians, before their conversion, as a state of alienation from the "commonwealth of Israel." They were "Gentiles in the flesh," that is by the physical fact that they were not Jews; and were contemptuously described as the uncircumcised by those who, as Jews, were circumcised by human hands. And

[1] Mazzini.

he conceives this to be only another way of describing alienation from God and His manifold covenants of promise, and from the Messiah, the hope of Israel and of mankind. They were without the Christian society, and therefore presumably without God and without hope.

¶ A lonely faith is an undeveloped, undiscovered, untested, unedified faith. Like a man cast on a desert island, it does not know what is in it; it cannot open out its natural germs. It is through the slowly realized recoguition of its part in the manifold and multitudinous kingdom of which it has become a member that it discloses its increasing capacities.[1]

¶ The devout meditation of the isolated man, which flitted through his soul, like a transient tone of Love and Awe from unknown lands, acquires certainty, continuance, when it is shared-in by his brother men. "Where two or three are gathered together" in the name of the Highest then first does the Highest, as it is written, "appear among them to bless them"; then first does an Altar and act of united Worship open a way from Earth to Heaven; whereon, were it but a simple Jacob's-ladder, the heavenly Messengers will travel, with glad tidings and unspeakable gifts for men.[2]

¶ It is so easy in happy family life, in absorption in one's special work, to forget the duties of a citizen, to avoid the fret and stress, may-be the hardships and the danger, of politics and social duty. But it is not enough for men to be "kind towards their friends, affectionate in their families, inoffensive towards the rest of the world." The true man kuows that he may not decline responsibility for those whom God has made his fellow-citizens. And higher still, higher than family or country, stands Humanity; and no man may do or sanction aught for either, which will hurt the race. Ever before Mazzini stood the vision of the cross, Christ dying for all men, not from utilitarian calculation of the greatest number, but because love embraces all.[3]

III.

The Privileges of Citizens.

1. *They were now citizens*—no more strangers, that is, outside the Kingdom of God entirely; nor even sojourners, that is,

[1] H. Scott Holland, *God's City*, 35.
[2] Carlyle, *Miscellanies*, iv. 11.
[3] Bolton King, *Mazzini*, 266.

resident foreigners, such as were found in most ancient States, enjoying some measure of protection and privilege, but not the full rights of citizens. Such was the position of proselytes in Israel. But now, Paul says to his Gentile readers, ye are no longer in any inferior position, but fellow-citizens with the saints, *i.e.* the people whom God has separated to Himself out of the world. Ye have all the privileges which these enjoy; nay, ye have them in common with them, so that there is absolutely no difference, since all alike now have these privileges on the same ground, that of the reconciling work of Christ. Ye have, through Him, an even more blessed position than the saints under the old covenant had, ye are "of the household of God"—not merely citizens of the Kingdom of God, but children of His family. This flows from the access to God as Father asserted in ver. 18.

¶ Roman citizenship was in many respects a unique thing. At least there is nothing in the modern world quite like it. When you speak of a citizen of Leicester or of London, you think of one who has either been born or has spent the best years of his life there, who has home, friends, and interests centred in its activities. Roman citizenship did not mean that. It was an imperial privilege rather than local. London indeed gives its freedom to a few honoured strangers, and that bears a faint resemblance to the Roman practice. The Roman citizenship was conferred upon a few persons all over the empire, persons who had never set foot in the great city. It was given to them for some service they had done, and descended to their children. Paul did not see Rome until he was an old man, but he was all his life a Roman citizen. And it meant in brief three things:—First, it was a grand Freemasonry. It brought a man into companionship and brotherhood with Romans everywhere. It gave him entrance to the best society. It made him one of a superior race, and put upon him a mark of nobility. Secondly, it conferred upon him certain legal rights. It was an aegis of protection over him. Roman law and all Rome's power were behind him. He could not be tried, condemned, or punished save by Romans, and if ever he was wronged, misjudged, falsely accused, he had the privilege of carrying his cause to the highest court, and appealing to Cæsar himself. And thirdly, there was his responsibility. Wherever he lived, in Tarsus or Ephesus, he remembered that he was a Roman, that Roman manners were expected of him, that his conduct must be that of an imperial race, and that he must try to fashion the place of his abode and

the things of daily life as far as possible after Rome's best models.[1]

¶ In the time of the Apostle when the mass of the population were slaves, the goods and chattels of their masters, lying at their absolute disposal for life or death, to be a Roman citizen was a distinction the value of which those who know nothing of slavery but the name can only very inadequately estimate. To be a citizen was to be a man, an integral part of a commonwealth. It was to be identified with its glory: it was to be shielded and armed with the majesty of its influence. In the very name there was a power that commanded the instant reverence of all that could not boast the privilege, and the sympathy of all that did. Hence the alarm of Lysias upon discovering that Paul was a Roman, and the deference which he, who had only purchased his freedom, could not help paying to the man who could declare himself freeborn. But what is mere civil freedom in comparison with spiritual freedom—freedom "from the law of sin and death"; freedom from the curse and tyranny of evil and the evil one; the freedom conferred by "the perfect law of liberty"; freedom to obey the instincts and impulses of our spiritual and immortal nature, and to enter into communion with the Invisible and the Eternal. "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides."[2]

2. *They now belong to the fellowship of the saints.*—They are citizens in the holy state—the commonwealth of the people consecrated to God—citizens with full rights and no longer strangers or unenfranchised residents. The idea of the chosen people all through the Old Testament is that they are as a whole consecrated to God. Priests and kings appointed by God to their several offices may indeed fulfil special functions in the national life, yet the fundamental idea is never lost, that the entire nation is holy, "a kingdom of priests." It is because this is true that the prophets can appeal as they do to the people in general, as well as to priests and rulers, as sharing altogether the responsibility of the national life. Now the whole of this idea is transferred, only deepened and intensified, to the Christian Church. That too has its divinely-ordained ministers, its differentiation of functions in the one body, but the whole body is priestly, and all are citizens—not merely residents but citizens, that is, intelligent participators in a common corporate life consecrated to God.

[1] J. G. Greenhough, *Christian Festivals and Anniversaries*, 159.
[2] J. H. Smith, *Healing Leaves*, 410.

¶ To the Apostle Paul every Christian was a saint. Turn to the inscriptions of his letters. This is the kind of address we find: "Paul and Timothy, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae." "Paul, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." It is quite obvious the references here are to living men and women, the men and women who formed the membership of these various churches. These were Paul's "saints." And, further, he does not confine the term to a select few in each church, conspicuous for their special piety. The people whom Paul addresses as "saints," we soon discover, were very far from being perfect people. They were, indeed, full of faults and imperfections and failings. Think of the people at Corinth with their quarrellings and excesses and sensualities! And yet Paul thinks and speaks of them as "saints"! It is not simply that in these faulty and imperfect Christians he sees the promise of the glorified saint, just as the naturalist may see the giant oak in the tiny acorn! Faults and all, these Christians were "saints," in this sense, that they were consecrated to God, and had given themselves to Christ. For that is the New Testament meaning of the word "saint"; it means one dedicated, set apart, to the will of God. And, in spite of all their shortcomings and sins, these early Christians had given themselves to Christ; the deepest thing in them was the love they bore to Christ; the life they lived, they lived in the faith of Christ. And every one of whom that can be said, according to the Apostle's teaching, is a "saint." [1]

¶ After being in China more than twenty years Griffith John said to young missionaries, "Preach the Gospel, and take time to be holy as the preparation." In the Mission Conference in Shanghai, in 1877, he said, "The missionary must above everything be a holy man; the Chinese expect it of him. I am persuaded that no minister can be a great spiritual power in whom this is not in good measure seen. He must be more than a good man; a man who takes time, not only to master the language and the literature of the people, but to be holy. . . . Brethren, this is what we need if this empire is to be moved by us. To this end the throne of grace must be our refuge; the shadow of the Almighty must every day and every hour be our dwelling, we must take time to be filled with His power, we must take time to be holy." [2]

[1] J. D. Jones, *Things Most Surely Believed*, 169.
[2] A. Murray, *Aids to Devotion*, 47.

3. More intimately still, *they belong to the family or household of God.*—A household is a place where a family is provided for, where there is a regular and orderly supply of ordinary needs. And the Church is the Divine household, in which God has provided stewards to make regular spiritual provision for men, so that they shall feel and know themselves members of a family, understood, sympathized with, helped, encouraged, disciplined, fed. But there is another idea which, in St. Paul's mind, attaches itself strongly to the idea of the "divine family." It is that in this household we are sons and not servants—that is, intelligent co-operators with God, and not merely submissive slaves. It is noticeable how often he speaks with horror of Christians allowing themselves again to be "subject to ordinances," or to "the weak and beggarly rudiments," the alphabet of that earlier education when even children are treated as slaves under mere obedience. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you." "Why do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? Handle not, taste not, touch not." It is perfectly true to say that what St. Paul is deprecating is a return to Jewish or pagan observances. But this is not all. He demands, not a change of observance only, but a change of spirit.

The prominent characteristic of a family is mutual affection. A family is held together by love. There is the love of the father for each and all, and there is the love of all for him and for each other. And so it is in the Divine family. "God is love"; pure, infinite, eternal love. This, as it is the glorious summary of His perfections, the grand resultant expression of all His attributes, is the characteristic of every individual member of His spiritual family. "We love him because he first loved us" and "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." That, however, which the Apostle seems to have had more particularly in view is the high privilege which attaches to this Divine relationship. "Ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God": that is—as children of God, born of His Spirit, and genuine members therefore of His spiritual family, you have a peculiar interest in His love and care. He, the Father of all men, is emphatically *your* Father. Others He regards indeed with the love of benevolence, but you He regards with

the love of complacency. Others participate in His universal goodness, but you are the objects of His special solicitude. A child has a certain right to the consideration of his father which no stranger to the family possesses: and so you, as members of God's family, have a claim upon His affection which none but His spiritual children can allege. Having received from Him not "the spirit of bondage again to fear," not the spirit of a slave, which shuns His presence and quails before His eye, but "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," so He privileges and encourages you to come before Him lovingly and trustfully, with all the freedom and confidence of a child, casting all your care upon Him, and looking for all things in that boundless love which has pledged all His attributes and excellences, all His treasures of grace and glory, for your perfection and blessedness.

¶ Sin brings separation from God. The word "depart" uttered to the workers of iniquity is not an arbitrary one. It voices a law of God that runs through all His moral realm. Sin pushes the prodigal away from his home and friends, his property, his pleasures, his reputation, his character, even his clothes and his food. The law of the word "depart" has driven him away from everything that was beautiful and of good report. Behold him in his rags and loneliness—feeding swine. Think it not strange, if that man is driven from God and goodness who yields himself to sin. By a changeless law of moral repulsion, he is pushed away. Is it hopeless? Yes, as long as his back is turned toward God. But let him "come to himself," let him feel his sin and degradation, let him long for home, for forgiveness, for his Father's face, and the law of changeless love takes hold of him.[1]

4. *The higher status involves a heavier responsibility.*—The enfranchised must do credit to their citizenship; they must live as becometh saints, and manifest the spirit, not of slaves, but of sons. Christian citizenship must begin with the thought of our individual life and purpose. The truly good citizen is made out of the truly good man. The common life is made of our individual lives, and the whole cannot be better than the constituent parts. If, then, our citizenship is to be a Christian citizenship, we must first of all be Christian men. The first thing that the Spirit of Christ does for every one who is in any real and vital sense a disciple, or, as we say in our modern phrase, a Christian man, is to

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 77.

lay hold of the spirit, breathing into it new aspirations, creating, as St. Paul would have said, the new man; and the new man in Christ thus born of the Spirit finds his heart aglow with new aims and new ambitions, new purposes and ideals of conduct. He is illuminated with new thought and with new conceptions of duty and of happiness.

¶ God knows if I could in any way, by preaching that great part of the Communion of Saints, make men generally feel how they are living one in another, and how every single soul has his share of responsibility for his fellows, and every single soul his blessing from undertaking that responsibility, and how any single soul receives a blessing from the fellowship of his fellows in everything that he undertakes—if I could impress that upon my countrymen generally, I would be content to do nothing more in all my life than to preach this greatest of all Christian doctrines.[1]

¶ As Paul waited in his Roman prison, he had all around him soldiers and civilians, high and low, men of various types and kinds, most of whom claimed, we may suppose, Roman citizenship, and, moreover, nearly all of whom were members of the household of Cæsar; and we can imagine the discussions of which these great texts in his letters are the echo. Yes, he says, you claim to be citizens of this great Empire of Rome, you are members of the household of Cæsar, and you are very proud of it all; but do you also remember that you have to think of your real calling as something deeper and broader and higher and more enduring than all of these, if you are to be in the best sense good citizens of the Roman Empire and good members of the Imperial household; why, then you must bear always in mind that you are called of God to live as members of the commonwealth of Christ, to remember in all circumstances that you are fellow-citizens with the saints and of God's household.[2]

¶ *The Nation* some time ago gave the story of a business man, the inheritor of an honoured name and honourable business traditions, who had a temptation put in his way to abandon the old methods of his firm, and join a great trust that cared more for its dividends than the welfare of its workmen. There was money in it, and the man was sorely tempted. But on the night in which the decision was to be taken, he fell into a reverie in front of his fire, and he seemed to behold his old father looking at him, with such concern in his eyes; and at the sight of his father's face the temptation lost its power; he must act as his father's son.[3]

[1] *Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ii. 312.
[2] Bishop J. Percival. [3] J. D. Jones, *Things Most Surely Believed*, 184.

Spiritual Architecture.

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Spiritual Architecture.

Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.—Eph. ii. 20-22.

1. St. Paul was a Jew, and the Jewish temple had the same fascination for his thought and the same powerful hold upon his imagination as in the case of other Jews. St. Paul had indeed ceased to worship there, but his attachment to the ideas that the temple represented was so strong that it became with him a favourite image and illustration of the Christian Church. Now as a building that temple was one of the most beautiful in existence; and as the chosen residence of Jehovah it was sacred in the mind of the Apostle. And yet one can hardly think that St. Paul was referring here to the temple at Jerusalem, for he was writing not to Jews but to the men and women of Ephesus, men and women who, for the most part, had never seen the temple at Jerusalem, and could neither appreciate its beauty nor understand the allusion. But then Ephesus had its temple too. Paul and the Ephesians were brought together on one occasion in very severe contest about the merits of this temple, the glory of their city, the temple of the great Diana of the Ephesians. That building was one of the wonders of the world. We are told that when it was erected all the architects of celebrity joined in constructing the plan, that it was reared of the most costly materials, and that after it had been burnt down by the hand of a madman or a fanatic equal care was exercised in the reconstruction of it. Every woman of Ephesus brought all that was costly and splendid to aid in the rebuilding of the favourite temple. It was a saying that the sun never shone upon a finer edifice than the temple of Diana at Ephesus. This structure was quite familiar to the

Ephesian Christians; they had ceased indeed to be worshippers at the shrine, but they had not ceased to admire the building. Hence the singular appropriateness with which the Apostle points to it as a beautiful illustration of the church or the building of which he was about to speak.

2. What the Apostle is about to speak of is not any material structure or ecclesiastical organization, but the great spiritual fellowship of the redeemed in Jesus Christ. It is a Church in which living men are the materials, of which God Himself is the Architect and the Builder. Its foundation has been laid with His own hand on the ruins of the fallen temple of humanity. It has been in process of construction ever since; its advancement has never been interrupted; it is still rising, this grand spiritual edifice! One day the glorious structure will be completed. That is the Church of which St. Paul writes—no earthly structure, no ecclesiastical organization, but this spiritual Church, built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets.

¶ If you liken human life and development to a dwelling, the lower story is on the ground, and made of clay. How roomy, and how full of men that live next to the dirt! Above that, however, is a story of iron. There are men of energy, and of a ruling purpose irresistible, seeking and gaining their ends at all hazards; and this story is populous, too. The next story is dressed in velvet and carved wood, and here are they that dwell in their affections, and are brought together by the sympathy of a common gentleness and kindness—but on the lower levels of life. Above that is a room of crystal and of diamonds, and there are but few that dwell in it. From its transparent walls one may behold the heaven and the earth. Out of it men may see the night as well as the day—men who live a life so high, so pure, and so serene that they may be said to dwell at the very threshold of the gate of heaven itself.[1]

I.

The Materials of the Building.

The Temple of God is made up of "the blessed company of all faithful people," the apostles and prophets being the foundation,

[1] Henry Ward Beecher.

and Christ Himself the chief corner-stone. This is that one body into which we are all baptized by one spirit. This is the society for which Christ prayed that they might be "all one."

¶ A few years ago I spent an evening at a meeting called for the purpose of deepening the spiritual life. It was a meeting of great power and blessing. That same night a dream came which fixed itself vividly on my mind. I stood on a rocky promontory overlooking a terrible chasm. Spanning the chasm, from one rocky side to the other, was a bridge of the most dazzling beauty, exquisite in design and workmanship, and built of the most costly material. As I stood in awe and wonder, I exclaimed, "How glorious!" No sooner had I spoken than a voice at my side, in tones of reproach, said: "You see only its beauty. Look again and see its size. That bridge is large enough to carry across in safety the entire human race." Again I looked, and lo! the bridge, albeit the most beautiful thing my eyes had ever seen, was so wide and so strong that the whole race might have crossed over it.[1]

1. Where do the materials come from? The stones for this building are dug out of that vast quarry of sinful humanity of which Ephesus formed a part. "In whom *ye also* are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

¶ A quaint old legend runs thus: Proceeding from a pile of material which had been left as rubbish, after a great building had been erected, a voice was heard shouting, "Glory! glory!" A passer-by, attracted by the rejoicing, stopped to know the cause; and found that the voice came from a mass of marble half covered with dust and rubbish. He brushed away the dirt, and said—

"What are you shouting for? There is surely little glory to you in the rubbish heap."

"No," said the marble, "not much glory now, that is true; but Michael Angelo has just passed by, and I heard him say, 'I see an angel in that stone.' And he has gone away for his mallets and chisels, and he is coming back to carve out the angel."

And the stone went off again in an ecstasy, shouting, "Glory! glory! glory!"

Humanity was like that stone in the rubbish heap—broken, unclean, useless; but the great Sculptor saw it, and He wondered that there was no one to help. As Angelo saw the angel in that stone, so God sees the image of His Son in the human wreck. Jesus would not have died for us had it been otherwise. To His

[1] C. B. Keenleyside, *God's Fellow-Workers*, 31.

eye, the flower is in the bud, the fruit in the blossom, the butterfly in the grub, the saint in the sinner, and the hero in the rustic. The grace of God carved a Müller out of the family scapegrace, a Pastor Hsi out of the ruined opium fiend, a John B. Gough out of the bar-room wreck.[1]

¶ Exclusive of animal decay, we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp, over-trodden path in the outskirts of a manufacturing town. I do not say mud of the road, because that is mixed with animal refuse; but take merely an ounce or two of the blackest slime of a beaten footpath on a rainy day, near a large manufacturing town.

That slime we shall find in most cases composed of clay (or brickdust, which is burnt clay) mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot—sand squeezing out clay, and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together, like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.

Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substance, it gradually becomes a white earth, already very beautiful; and fit, with help of congealing fire, to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and be kept in kings' palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best. Leave it still quiet to follow its own instinct of unity, and it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear, but hard; nor only clear and hard, but so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call it then a sapphire.

Such being the consummation of the clay, we give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes, first, a white earth, then proceeds to grow clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine, parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any hard material whatsoever. We call it then an opal.

In next order the soot sets to work; it cannot make itself white at first, but instead of being discouraged, tries harder and harder, and comes out clear at last, and the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness that it had, obtains in exchange

[1] C. B. Keenleyside.

the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond.

Last of all the water purifies or unites itself, contented enough if it only reach the form of a dew-drop; but if we insist on its proceeding to a more perfect consistence, it crystallizes into the shape of a star.

And for the ounce of slime which we had by political economy of competition, we have by political economy of co-operation, a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow.[1]

2. The *Foundation* has been laid by apostles and prophets. They are our spiritual progenitors, the fathers of our faith. We see Jesus Christ through their eyes; we read His teaching, and catch His Spirit in their words. Their testimony, in its essential facts, stands secure in the confidence of mankind. Nor was it their words alone, but the men themselves—their character, their life and work—that laid for the Church its historical foundation. This "glorious company of the apostles" formed the first course in the new building, on whose firmness and strength the stability of the entire structure depends. Their virtues and their sufferings, as well as the revelations made through them, have guided the thoughts and shaped the life of countless multitudes of men, of the best and wisest men in all ages since. They have fixed the standard of Christian doctrine and the type of Christian character. At our best, we are but imitators of them as they were of Christ.

¶ If a man is to be a pillar in the temple of his God by and by, he must be some kind of a prop in God's house to-day. We are here to support, not to be supported. No one can be a living stone on the foundations of the Spiritual House, which is God's habitation, without being a foundation to the stones above him.[2]

3. Christ is the chief *Corner-stone.*

The idea of the corner-stone, so repeatedly alluded to in Scripture, can be understood only by reference to the buildings of remote ages. We must imagine a massive stone, like one of those at Stonehenge, cut to a right angle, and laid in the building so that its two sides should lie along the two walls, which meet at a corner, thus binding them together in such a way that neither

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (*Works*, vii. 207).

[2] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 7.

force nor weather could dissever them. This term does not necessarily signify that it would be put at the top or at the bottom of a building; it only means that it occupied a very important position, which it would have if it lay a few courses above the lowest, so as to act by its weight on those below, and to serve as a renewed basis to those above. A corner-stone bound together the sides of a building. Some of the corner-stones in the ancient work of the Temple foundations are seventeen or nineteen feet long, and seven and a half feet thick. At Nineveh the corners are sometimes formed of one angular stone. A corner-stone must, then, be of great importance; hence, more than once in Scripture great princes or leaders of a nation are called by this name of corner, or corner-stone (Judg. xx. 2; 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Isa. xix. 13). In A.V. they are called the chief, or the stay, of their people; in the original, the word is "corners," or "corner-stones."

But in a sense far higher, far beyond that in which any earthly prince can be called by this name, may we apply it to our Lord Jesus Christ. He so applied it to Himself, when speaking the parable of the Householder on the last week of His public teaching, as recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke (Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17). It was so applied by St. Peter when, confronting the Sanhedrin, he boldly charged them with being the murderers of Christ: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

¶ Christianity is not one truth, but many; it is a whole system of truth, and yet is there not one truth in the system that is prominently majestic, as is the sun in the solar system? It is the truth that centres in Jesus Christ. There are many precious truths on which the Church is built; there is one truth on which the Church reposes, as upon the corner-stone. There is one truth on which our hopes and prospects all depend. There are many bright and glorious hopes which we gain from this Bible, but there is one which is more prominent than all the others—it is Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners and the King of men. There are many stones in the foundation of our hopes for the future; there is one corner-stone, that is Jesus Christ.[1]

¶ The plain historic truth in regard to the Christian Church is this, that from the beginning the Christian Church has held an

[1] R. Vaughan Pryce.

attitude towards Jesus that absolutely forbids His classification with other men, that absolutely lifts Him above all that have ever trodden the earth before or since, and pays to Him such honour as can justly be given only to the perfect incarnation of the eternal God. The very first record that we have tells us that the early Church used to sing a hymn to Christ as God early in the morning; and it was for that that He was ever worshipped.[1]

Christ is made the sure foundation
And the precious corner-stone,
Who, the two walls underlying
Bound in each, binds both in one,
Holy Sion's help for ever,
And her confidence alone.

All that dedicated City,
Dearly loved by God on high,
In exultant jubilation
Pours perpetual melody;
God the One and God the Trinal,
Singing everlastingly.

To the temple, where we call Thee,
Come, O Lord of Hosts, to-day;
With Thy wonted loving-kindness
Hear Thy people as they pray,
And Thy fullest benediction
Shed within its walls for aye.

Here vouchsafe to all Thy servants
What they supplicate to gain;
Here to have and hold for ever
Those good things their prayers obtain,
And hereafter in Thy glory
With Thy blessed ones to reign.

Laud and honour to the Father,
Laud and honour to the Son,
Laud and honour to the Spirit,
Ever Three and Ever One:
Consubstantial, coëternal
While unending ages run.[2]

[1] H. van Dyke.

[2] *Angularis Fundamentum*, Latin Office Hymn, translated by J. M. Neale.

II.

The Design of the Building.

The plan of the Spiritual Temple was drawn by the hand of the Master Architect, who threw up the over-arching dome of the skies and scattered it full of worlds; and taught all architects how to design and all builders how to build. The plan bears on its face the Divine imprint. No human mind could have conceived it, and no human hand could have drawn it. It is inherent in the nature of the Infinite. It is not an afterthought of man, but a forethought of God; not a human accident, but a Divine plan. In beauty it as far exceeds anything that man could draw as the blue sky or the star-studded arch of the heavens exceeds in beauty the highest triumph of human skill. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts higher than our thoughts, and God's ways than our ways.

¶ There is a story of an old mason whose work day by day was the mixing of the mortar for use in the erection of a beautiful building. It was this old man's custom to contemplate the plan of the finished building as displayed outside the contractor's office. He said it helped him to mix his mortar so much better if he could keep before his mind the lovely thing that the architect had planned. The Bible is the rule of Faith, the character-builder's "Vade mecum." It pictures the Perfect Temple, Christ Jesus. It says that we shall be like Him. And he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.[1]

¶ The greatest European painter of the past fifty years was probably Arnold Boecklin. He has influenced modern painting abroad more, perhaps, than any other. How? When a young man in Florence his soul was filled with an ideal of painting which was quite other than that of any of his contemporaries, and he laboured to put this ideal upon canvas. At first no one would buy his pictures, and he nearly starved to death. But he laboured on because he loved his art. By and by when he became known, his work, it might almost be said, produced a revolution in the art world. It was not this revolution, however, that he had striven for, but the beauties his soul had seen. So with the Church. The Church will reform the world, not by making that reform her object, but by fixing her gaze and desire upon the

[1] E. J. Padfield.

ideal which has been set before her by her Lord, the ideal of the "Holy Catholic Church."[1]

1. *There is unity in the design.*—The building is not a heap of stones thrown carelessly together. It has a marvellous symmetry. It is fitly framed together. The idea in the Apostle's mind seems to be a temple, with a number of courts all being built at the same time. At first there seems to be but very little connexion between them, but as the building proceeds, every several building grows into a holy temple. How lovely it is to trace the gradual growth of this building, the simple devotion of the first believers, the brotherly love of the Pentecostal Church, the missionary ardour of St. Paul and his companions, the faith and constancy of the early martyrs, who loved not their lives to the death; the steadfast devotion to truth of Waldenses, and Lollards, the Huguenots, and our own Reformers; the consistent godliness in some unknown cottage home, and the brilliant services of Christian philanthropists, who have overthrown gigantic evils by the power of the cross of Christ. And for all this building the chief corner-stone is Jesus Christ, but if He is the chief corner-stone, we also are to be corner-stones, joining together what would otherwise run counter to one another.

The image is that of an extensive pile of buildings, such as the ancient temples commonly were, in process of construction at different points over a wide area. The builders work in concert, upon a common plan. The several parts of the work are adjusted to each other; and the various operations in process are so harmonized that the entire construction preserves the unity of the architect's design. Such an edifice was the apostolic Church—one, but of many parts—in its diverse gifts and multiplied activities animated by one Spirit and directed towards one Divine purpose.

St. Peter and St. Paul carried out their plans independently, only maintaining a general understanding with each other. The apostolic founders, inspired by one and the self-same Spirit, could labour at a distance, upon material and by methods extremely various, with entire confidence in each other and with an assurance of the unity of result which their teaching and administration

[1] N. H. Marshall.

would exhibit. The many buildings rested on the one foundation of the Apostles. "Whether it were I or they," says our Apostle, "so we preach, and so ye believed." Where there is the same Spirit and the same Lord, men do not need to be scrupulous about visible conformity. Elasticity and individual initiative admit of entire harmony of principle. The hand may do its work without irritating or obstructing the eye, and the foot run on its errands without mistrusting the ear.

¶ As Hooker lay dying, he was observed to be held in an ecstasy of contemplation; and on being asked what might be the subject of his thoughts, he replied, that he was admiring the wondrous order which prevails throughout all the distinctions and multitudes of the heavenly world. "Without which order," he added, "peace could not be in heaven." If on earth, which is "without the gate," we find so much regularity and order, what may we imagine to be the order and fitness of all things in the house of our Father's glory?[1]

¶ Unity in itself, especially unity conditioned upon a common catechism, is not an object. Neither is it a thing to be compassed by any direct effort. It is an incident, not a principle, or a good by itself. It has its value in the valuable activities it unites, and the conjoining of beneficent powers. The more we seek it, the less we have it. Besides, most of what we call division in the Church of God is only distribution. The distribution of the Church, like that of human society, is one of the great problems of Divine wisdom; and the more we study it, observing how the personal tastes, wants, and capacities of men in all ages and climes are provided for, and how the parts are made to act as stimulants to each other, the less disposed shall we be to think that the work of distribution is done badly. It is not the same thing with Christian Unity, either to be huddled into a small inclosure, or to show the world how small a plat of ground we can all stand on. Unity is a grace broad as the universe, embracing in its ample bosom all right minds that live, and outreaching the narrow contents of all words and dogmas.[2]

¶ Himself the staunchest champion of the existing union of Church and State, Stanley practised his own precept of making "the most of what there is of good in institutions, in opinions, in communities, in individuals." And this sympathy was neither a strategic union, nor an armed truce, nor the tolerance of

[1] J. Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, 84.

[2] *Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian*, 62.

indifference. It was the real fellow-feeling which springs from the power, and the habit, of descending into those deeper regions of thought and emotion where conflicting opinions find a point of union. To the Baptists he was grateful for the preservation of "one singular and interesting relic of primitive and apostolic times"; to the Quakers, for "dwelling, even with exaggerated force, on the insignificance of all forms, of all authority, as compared with the inward light of conscience"; to the "Dissenting Churches" generally, for keeping alive "that peculiar force of devotion and warmth which is apt to die out in light of reason and in the breath of free inquiry." Religion, he told his American hearers, could ill afford to lose even "the Churches which we most dislike, and which in other respects have wrought most evil."[1]

2. *The design has holiness written upon it.*—In what sense do we speak of the Church as "holy"? The word as applied to the ancient Jewish Church, from which it was inherited by the Christian Church, meant "set apart for God's service," "consecrated to Him." It implied the election of the nation by God for His purposes; as it is said in Deuteronomy, "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself." These covenant privileges the Apostles regarded as being carried on to the Christian Church, and accordingly St. Paul speaks habitually of the members of the Christian society as "holy," the word which our version renders "saints"; and St. Peter similarly quotes and applies to the Church the declaration, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation"—holy because elect.

But both St. Peter and St. Paul invariably explain that this holiness in the sense of consecration implies a demand for holiness in the sense of purity of life. "Ye are the temple of God," says St. Paul, "and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." And so St. Peter, "As he which hath called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living." Your holiness must not be merely "separation for God's service," it must be conformity to God's nature. It must be holiness in the sense in which God can be spoken of as "holy," *i.e.* perfect, sinless. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." The condition of this freedom from

[1] R. E. Prothero, *The Life of Dean Stanley*, ii. 242.

sin is abiding in Christ and His Spirit, and this is not only possible, but a growing reality which will one day be actual fact of experience.

¶ The Tabernacle was holy because it was indwelt by God. Of course there is a sense in which all places are indwelt by God. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." But in a very special sense God chose to make the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, for the time being, His local habitation. There it was He manifested Himself, as He manifested Himself nowhere else, to man. There it was He held converse with those whom He had appointed as the representatives of man. There it was He accepted the sacrifices which prefigured the great Sacrifice which was to be offered in the end of the world. The Tabernacle was holy because it was indwelt by God. The Church of Christ is holy because she is indwelt by God the Holy Ghost. "The Lord (says the Prophet) shall suddenly come to his temple." May we not say that there was at least one great fulfilment of that prophecy on the day of Pentecost, when God the Holy Ghost suddenly came, and by coming laid the first stones of that great Temple of the living Church of Christ which is the Holy Habitation of the Most High?

God occupied, if one may say so, but part of the Tabernacle. God the Holy Ghost occupies every part of the Christian Church. At first sight that seems a truism, but it contains a momentous question for every one of us. If God the Holy Ghost occupies every part of the Christian Temple, if the Church of Christ is filled in every corner by God the Holy Ghost, the question arises, Does God the Holy Ghost dwell in me? If not, then I am not part of that holy temple and I am not part of the Church of God. Let there be no possible mistake; nothing but the indwelling of God the Holy Ghost can make us parts of the true Church of Christ, of that holy temple which is built up of living stones.[1]

¶ "Ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Wonderful equivalence and exchange! The Lord leaves not His disciple orphaned; He comes to him; He is in him; He manifests Himself to him, and abides in him. And yet it was expedient that He should go away; for otherwise the Paraclete would not come. The Paraclete comes; and behold He mediates and makes for the Christian's soul and self a Presence of the Lord which somehow is better—far better—for the man in this his pilgrimage

[1] W. M. Hopkins, *The Tabernacle and its Teaching*, 92.

and tabernacle than even the joy and glory, if it were granted, of his Saviour's corporeal proximity—shall I dare to say than his Saviour's personal indwelling as the Son of Man outside the vehicle of this Presence of the Spirit?

This sacred mediation of the heavenly Spirit, this conveyance through Him of every blessing of the vital Union, appears everywhere in the subject. In the imagery of the Building it is "in the Spirit" that the saints, compacted into their Corner Stone, are "being builded together to be the habitation of God." "Where that Spirit is"—if I may quote words of the Dean of Llandaff—"where that Spirit is, there is the Body, and only there." And so it is when the exercises and actions of the spiritual life—which life is Christ—are spoken of at large. It is "in the Spirit" that the saint—that is to say, the genuine Christian here below—"has access" in Christ unto the Father. It is those who are "led by the Spirit" who "are" in truth and deed, not in a certain sense, but in reality and nature, "the sons of God" in His Son. It is "by the Spirit" that they "mortify," that they continuously do to death, "the deeds of the body," in the power and name of Christ. It is "by the Spirit" that they "walk" in Christ. It is "because of the Spirit dwelling in them" (a truth full of significance as to the nature of the body of the resurrection) that "their mortal body shall be quickened," in the day when their Lord from heaven shall change it into likeness to His own. Of that harvest the indwelling Spirit is the Firstfruits. Of that inheritance He is the Earnest. So the Sevenfold One is sent forth into all the earth, as the Eyes, as the Presence, of the exalted Lamb of the Sacrifice. It is by Him, and by Him alone, that that presence is in the Church, and is in the Christian.[1]

3. *The actual is ever approximating to the ideal.*—The work keeps moving on. Just as, when any great building is being erected, you see here and there the different workmen engaged with the particular portion which devolves upon them, so it is with the holy temple St. Paul speaks of in the text. The ministers and stewards of God's mysteries are doing their work in the particular part of the spiritual building assigned to them. One may have his work to do in a part of the building where a skilled and superior workman is required; another in a more humble place, though it too is necessary for the perfection of the whole; some have to chisel wealth into stones meet for the Master's use; some to chip off the excrescences of intellect, in

[1] Bishop H. C. G. Moule, *All in Christ*, 171.

order that the stones may fit into the walls of God's building; some have, with ruder hands, to blast the rocks of ignorance and prejudice, and to be content to leave the polished corners of the temple to more experienced hands. But you see, all the while the building is growing; it is rising higher and higher; and as we see more activity, more zeal, more earnestness in the cause of this building of God, we know that Satan trembles; because every living stone in the spiritual building, which is precious in the eyes of the great Architect of the Universe, is a stone rescued from the ruins of the world, destined to have its final place amongst those of which the Lord speaks, when He says, "They shall be mine, when I make up my jewels."

¶ We did not speak of the "higher life," nor of a "beautiful Christian," for this way of putting it would not have been in keeping with the genius of Drumtochty. Religion there was very lowly and modest—an inward walk with God. No man boasted of himself, none told the secrets of the soul. But the Glen took notice of its saints, and did them silent reverence, which they themselves never knew.[1]

¶ We call to mind the beautiful description by Tennyson of that mysterious city which Gareth and those with him beheld through the mist. They pronounced it "a city of enchanters," and it was told them concerning its builders—

> They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
> Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
> And built it to the music of their harps.
>
> For an ye heard a music, like enow
> They are building still, seeing the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever.

III.

The Use of the Building.

1. *It is to be "a habitation of God in the Spirit."*—God is to be the occupant of the Temple. Here is the eternal destiny of the true Church of God. It is not only that it is to be "saved

[1] Ian Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush.*

in Christ for ever," ineffable as is the wonder of that fact. It is not only that it is "to enjoy God fully for ever," though that amazing prospect is so amply and definitely revealed. It is to be a holy Sanctuary, a Shrine, a Divine Presence-Chamber, a permanent Habitation of God. In measure, the wonderful fact has already begun to be; already He dwells in His people, and walks in them; already the eternal Son resides in the very heart of the true member of the Church, by faith. But all this is as when some building, planned already by the master in its final glory, is slowly rising, and beginning to show, amidst fragments and dust and the noise of the workmen, some hints and outlines of what it is to be; the owner, the intending dweller in it, walks in and out amidst the vast beginnings, and perhaps rests and shelters himself under the unfinished walls and roofs. It will be otherwise when the last stone is in place, and the last splendid equipment of the chambers is completed, and he receives his admiring friends in the banquet-chamber, and shines out amidst the shining of his palace, himself the central splendour of it in all his dignity of wealth and welcome. So it is with the saints, and with their common life as the Church of God. Wonderful are the beginnings. Amidst all the apparent confusions of the field where the building is in progress, its form and scale begin to show themselves, across the perspective of centuries and continents. And when the stones already in place are scrutinized, it is found that each of them is a miniature of the whole; a shrine, a home of the presence of the Lord, by faith. But a day of inauguration is drawing on when "we shall see greater things than these." Then the Divine indwelling in each "living stone" will be complete and ideal, "for sinners there are saints indeed." And as for the community, it will cohere and be one thing with a unity and symmetry unimaginable now.

There all the millions of His saints
Shall in one song unite,
And each the bliss of all shall view
With infinite delight.

¶ Paul seems to say to these Ephesians: "You have in your city a magnificent temple, the wonder of the world, the temple of Diana. It bears witness to man's need of worship. But you

know that that temple is not really a habitation of God. The eternal Spirit of God dwells not in temples of stone and marble. The one real temple of the Divine Spirit is the human heart. Ye are the habitation of God." Socrates, indeed, and the Stoics had taught this, but St. Paul's thought goes far beyond that of Socrates and the Stoics. It is not only the individual human heart, says St. Paul, that is the temple of God—it is a Society. "Ye are builded together," he says, "in Christ into an habitation of God in the Spirit." Here is the originality of the conception—a new conception of a Society so filled with the life of Christ that it may be said to be "in Him"; built up, like some cathedral, into a glorious unity of idea, with infinite diversity in its members—a conception then new, now so familiar, of a Church, a continuous embodiment on earth of the Spirit of Christ. And this new conception, this dream, has been realized; it took form; it became a living organism; it lives to-day; it is the Church of Christ.[1]

2. *The Church should reveal the power of the indwelling God.*—It is a "habitation of God in the Spirit." This is what no other society is or can be. The Church possesses Divine gifts and powers, because it is the abode of a Divine presence. It is a spiritual Society. The world looks on the Church and sees only a great organization, with much that is imperfect, much perverted, much incomplete. The Divine origin of the Church, the Divine presence with the Church, have never saved it, were never pledged to save it, from the consequences of human wilfulness or error. The world knows nothing of the indwelling Spirit which gives to the Church its essential character. How could it? For we are speaking of that "Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Yes; the very meaning and purpose of the existence of the Church is that it is the area, the clothing, the environment, the casket, of the supernatural. If it is not this, it is nothing; it is a mere human society, graceless, giftless, powerless. If it *is* this, it is verily "the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

¶ In accomplishing the conversion of the world, the Church has two points to prove and testify—first, that Christ is alive and at work now to-day on earth, and that He can be found of them that believe, and manifest Himself to those that love Him; and,

[1] **J. M. Wilson in *The Guardian*, May 29, 1911, p. 725.**

secondly, that He is so by virtue of the deed done once for all at Calvary—by which the prince of this world was judged, and the world was overcome, and man given access to God. What proofs can the Church offer for these two points? It has three proofs to give. First, its own actual life. This is its primary witness, that Christ is now alive at the right Hand of God the Father. This is the cardinal testimony. "Christ is alive, otherwise I should not be alive as you see me this day." And then this personal life of Christ in His Church verifies and certifies to the world the reality of that old life on earth, of that Death on Calvary, of that Resurrection on Olivet. The fact that the man at the Beautiful Gate has this perfect soundness in the presence of all, the very man whom they knew and saw so lame,—this makes it certain that God did send His Son Christ Jesus to be a Prince of Life. And, therefore, the living Church bears a book about with it, the Gospel book, the Apostolic witness, the witness of those who so beheld, tasted, handled, the Word of Life, of those who were actually there all the time in which "the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us." And again, the body carries with it a third witness; not only the Apostolic record, but the Apostolic rite, the act commanded by the dying Christ to be done for ever as a memorial and a witness until His coming again. Ever that society rehearses this deed of the new covenant, that deed which is the seal and pledge to men for all time, of the one covenant sealed with Christ's blood once for all, even on the night of His betrayal. Ever this rehearsal continues until Christ comes again, and every such rehearsal verifies, to all who take and eat the bread, that great sacrifice which the Lord offered when in the upper chamber among the Twelve, "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake."[1]

¶ Dr. Dale was spending a summer holiday at Grasmere, and had walked over to Patterdale to spend the day with Dr. Abbott, the headmaster of the City of London School, an able and prominent Broad Churchman. In the early evening his friend started with him to set him on his way home, still intent on the questions, religious and ecclesiastical, which they had discussed for many hours. "We were walking together from the head of Ullswater up towards the foot of Grisedale tarn, and he asked me, with an expression of astonishment and incredulity, whether I really thought that if the shepherds of Patterdale—a dozen or score of them — determined to constitute themselves a Congregational church, it was possible for such a church to fulfil the purposes for

[1] H. Scott Holland, *Helps to Faith and Practice*, 94.

which churches exist. To such a question there could be but one answer. Great natural sagacity, high intellectual culture, however admirable, are not essential: 'It is enough if, when they meet, they really meet in Christ's name—but no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.'" Christ's presence with the shepherds of Patterdale would be a sufficient reply to all who challenged their competency to discharge the functions of church government. Whatever gifts and endowments might be necessary for the development of religious thought and life in their full perfection, the Divine presence was its one and its only essential condition.[1]

3. *Each individual life should be a shrine of the Spirit.*—Union with Christ, and a consequent life in the Spirit, are sure to result in the growth of the individual soul and of the collective community. That Divine Spirit dwells in and works through every believing soul, and while it is possible to grieve and to quench It, to resist and even to neutralize Its workings, these are the true sources of all our growth in grace and knowledge. The process of building may be and will be slow. Sometimes lurking enemies will pull down in a night what we have laboured at for many days. Often our hands will be slack and our hearts will droop. We shall often be tempted to think that our progress is so slow that it is doubtful if we have ever been on the foundation at all or have been building at all. But "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," and the task is not ours alone, but His in us. We have to recognize that effort is inseparable from building, but we have also to remember that growth depends on the free circulation of life, and that if we are, and abide, in Jesus, we cannot but be built "for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

Till man has personal relations with God, it is hard to conceive of his having any corporate relations. It would be a monstrous unreality to conceive of a society which God could make His abode, in no single member of which was the presence of the Spirit of God. A whole cannot be utterly diverse from its parts. The presence of the Spirit of God and of the life of God in the soul of man must be presupposed before we can even approach the subject of the corporate life of the Church, or, in other words, of the building up of the Christian Society as a

[1] *Life of R. W. Dale*, 247.

habitation of God in the Spirit. There is no doubt there was at one time a great danger of over-individualism among religious people in this land. It was not an uncommon thing to hear people say, "A man's religion lies between himself and his God." Why, half the Bible is straight against that! Possibly there may be some little danger the other way now.

¶ Man is a temple either for God or His opposite. It is for us to choose whom we will have to live within. The secret of power is the recognition of the all-loving, me-loving, God. All-holy, and therefore never resting, cost Him what it may, till we are holy too. Away with the austere man! Enter and abide, thou striving Spirit of Love! It is a wonderful thing, that consciousness of the Indwelling Jesus. I only lately became positively conscious of this. *How*, I do not know, of course; but it was so, and He abides. When over us and in us there is One greater and holier, and more filled with love for us than our furthest thought, and we know it and walk in the light of it, there is power and sweet influence.[1]

¶ In the days of Trajan there lived a Saint of God named Ignatius, who sealed his testimony with his blood. Ignatius was commonly known as *Theophoros*—or the Bearer of God. I imagine that there was such a pre-eminent holiness, such a supernatural sanctity in his character that he seemed to be a kind of incarnation of the Divine life. The title given to Ignatius is one to which every Christian who is faithful to his calling may in some degree humbly lay claim. He is a Theophoros, a God-bearer. Christ dwells in him and he dwells in Christ. Christ is "in him the hope of glory."[2]

¶ We all live in the sublime. Where else can we live? That is the only place of life. And if aught be lacking, it is not the chance of living in heaven, rather it is watchfulness and meditation, also perhaps a little ecstasy of soul. Though you have but a little room, do you fancy that God is not there, too, and that it is impossible to live therein a life that shall be somewhat lofty? If you complain of being alone, of the absence of events, of loving no one and being unloved, do you think that the words are true? Do you imagine that one can possibly be alone, that love can be a thing one knows, a thing one sees; that events can be weighed like the gold and silver of ransom? Cannot a living thought—proud or humble, it matters not; so it come but from your soul, it is great for you—cannot a lofty desire, or simply a moment of

[1] F. W. Crossley, in *Life*, by J. Rendel Harris, 70.

[2] S. C. Lowry, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 20.

solemn watchfulness to life, enter a little room? And if you love not, or are unloved, and can yet see with some depth of insight that thousands of things are beautiful, that the soul is great and life almost unspeakably earnest, is that not as beautiful as though you loved or were loved? And if the sky itself is hidden from you, "does not the great starry sky," asks the poet, "spread over our soul, in spite of all, under guise of death?"[1]

Our souls go too much out of self
  Into ways dark and dim:
'Tis rather God who seeks for us,
  Than we who seek for Him.

Yet surely through my tears I saw
  God softly drawing near;
How came He without sight or sound
  So soon to disappear?

God was not gone: but He so longed
  His sweetness to impart,
He too was seeking for a home,
  And found it in my heart.[2]

[1] Maeterlinck, *The Treasure of the Humble*, 179. [2] F. W. Faber.

The Father and the Families.

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THE FATHER AND THE FAMILIES.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.—Eph. iii. 14, 15.

1. THERE are two great prayers in this Epistle. The first is in the first chapter. It seemed to Paul that the gospel was so wonderful that it was impossible for men to see the glory of it unless they were taught of God, and therefore after his lofty account of God's purpose to bring the heavens and the earth into an eternal unity in Christ, he tells the Christians at Ephesus that he was continually praying that God would give them "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," and that the eyes of their heart might be enlightened that they might know the hope to which God had called them, and "the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Spiritual illumination is necessary if we are to know the contents of the Christian gospel; for the gospel reveals invisible and eternal things lying far beyond the frontiers of the common thoughts of men.

The second prayer takes another form. Its central idea is strength. Strength is necessary as well as light. We cannot *know* the gospel unless its glories are divinely revealed to us; and the spiritual *energy* necessary to receive it and to hold it fast must also come from God.

2. The prayer which he offers here is no less remarkable and unique in his Epistles than the act of praise in chapter i. Addressing himself to God as the Father of angels and of men, the Apostle asks that He will endow the readers in a manner corresponding to "the riches of his glory"—in other words, that the gifts He bestows may be worthy of the universal Father, worthy of the august character in which God has now revealed Himself to mankind. According to this measure, St. Paul beseeches

for the Church, in the first instance, two gifts, which after all are one,—viz., *the inward strength of the Holy Spirit* (ver. 16), and *the permanent indwelling of Christ* (ver. 17). These gifts he asks on his readers' behalf with a view to their gaining two further blessings, which are also one,—viz., *the power to understand the Divine plan* (ver. 18) as it has been expounded in this letter, and so *to know the love of Christ* (ver. 19). Still, beyond these there rises in the distance a further end for man and the Church: *the reception of the entire fulness of God.* Human desire and thought thus reach their limit; they grasp at the infinite.

¶ Few of us can fail to have been struck with the solemnity and high tone of this prayer. It may be that some of us have thought that it contained a higher standard of feeling and life than we could hope to reach, and therefore have been tempted to abandon the consideration of it in silence; whilst others, striving to force the feelings which it recommends, have been betrayed into false excitement and unreality. The remedy for both these common cases is a careful consideration of the Apostle's petition as a whole. Almost every word is a rich mine of thought, but there is a lesson contained in its general scope which we must carefully observe. It is indeed very spiritual; but it is not the less practical. It is a pattern for the most advanced Christian; but it is a lesson for the weakest believer. We are not to regard it only as an Apostle's prayer for the early saints, who lived in days far different from our times. It is a prayer suitable for all ministers of the Gospel, for all times. It shows us what is the object of Church teaching, and therefore points out the state to which all Christians ought to be advancing. The Apostle did not pray for any blessing which his people could not receive; and therefore all he prayed for they were bound to seek. Hence this petition came to the Ephesians not only as an evidence of their pastor's love and devotion, but with an implied command.

And so it is now: the prayers of the Church are exhortations to the faithful. For example: when the earnest petition arises from the altar, "that this congregation here present may with meek heart and due reverence hear and receive Thy holy word," it is a solemn admonition to cultivate that very meekness and reverence for which we pray. And when the Apostle tells us: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father that he would grant you according to the riches of his exceeding glory, to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man"; when he prays "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,"

and that we may be skilled in the heavenly wisdom of the "love of Christ," as the members of His mystical body should be—are not these several petitions so many loving exhortations to us to seek after spiritual strength, to acquire a constant faith, to study God's attributes, especially His love in the Cross, that love which exceeds all other mysteries and surpasses all other knowledge; and to strive after all the perfection which God requires? The Apostle opens the door of his "closet" to show all Christian pastors how they should pray for their people; and all Christian people what they should seek for themselves. As in church solemn lessons are conveyed in the services, so here we are admitted into the awful privacy of an Apostle, to learn our duty whilst we catch his fervour. So beautifully is edification always mingled with devotion.[1]

3. The prayer is conveniently divided into four petitions: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man"—that is the first. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"—that is the second, the result of the first, and the preparation for the third. "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge"—that is the third. And all lead up at last to that wonderful desire beyond which nothing is possible—"that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

I.

The Occasion of this Prayer.

"For this cause."

1. "For this cause," says St. Paul, "I bow my knees,"—what is the cause on account of which he bows his knees? In order to ascertain this cause we must look back, first of all, to the beginning of the chapter. The chapter begins with the same words, "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles." Then there comes a parenthesis, which continues until the verse immediately preceding our text. Therefore, if we want to find the connexion, we must look at the close of the pre-

[1] J. Armstrong.

ceding chapter, where the cause is set forth in language beautifully and expressively iustructive. There the Apostle has been speaking of those who were "builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit," of those who, having been previously afar off, had been made nigh by the blood of Christ, who were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God"; he had been speaking of those who were saved "by grace through faith," who had been brought into covenant with God through Christ, through whom they had "access by one Spirit to the Father"; and then he says, "for *this cause* I bow my knees," that is, as if he had said: God hath blessed my ministry to you—Ephesians; there was a time when you were "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world"; but the God of all grace has reversed all this, and has now "created you anew in Christ Jesus"; and "for *this cause* I bow my knees to the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named."

2. There is, however, an immediate and pressing necessity for this prayer, but it is rather implied than expressed. When he wrote this letter and offered this prayer, Paul was a prisoner in Rome, a circumstance which appears to have had a very depressing, if not a staggering effect on the newly-converted brethren at Ephesus. Retaining some of the follies of their former heathenism, they looked upon this calamity as an evil omen, and drew from it strange inferences. A prisoner in Rome, and an ambassador of the King of kings! A favourite of heaven and shut up in gaol! Can it be? Is Christianity of God? Is Paul true? So thought and so reasoned these novices in the Christian faith, as is evidently implied in the words immediately preceding our text—"Wherefore I ask that ye *faint not* at my tribulations for you, which are your glory." To save them from "fainting," and to keep them steadfast in the faith, notwithstanding his imprisonment, he prayed for them. It is occasions that make prayer. We never pray as we ought without having definite cases before our minds, and seeking the Divine help, either for ourselves or others, according to the actual circumstances and the special needs of the time.

¶ These Ephesian Christians have passed away, their city lies in ruins; the heron and the stork wander where once the multitude stood. The hand that wrote these lines has long since mouldered into dust; and yet to-day these words are as fresh and appropriate as when first penned. For the fundamental facts of human need and Divine grace remain through all generations, and are true of all nations. To the English Christians of the twentieth century, who represent the same Gentile Church as the Ephesians of the first, the message of the Apostle is suitable: "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man."[1]

II.

The Apostle's Attitude in Prayer.

"I bow my knees."

1. "I bow my knees." Why is that mentioned? Is not posture a small thing compared with spirit? Why does the Apostle refer to the attitude? It is because of what that attitude meant to him and means to every sincere worshipper. Kneeling is the attitude of humility, of confession, of entreaty, of worship. Some have gone further, and thought that kneeling in prayer is a symbol of man's fallen state, that he can no longer stand erect before God, but is broken and crushed in the presence of Jehovah. Certainly, kneeling is the natural position of man before the Almighty and All-Holy Creator. The holiest and highest of men have approached God thus. Solomon, the greatest, except David, of all Jewish kings, upon the day of the dedication of the Temple, knelt down before all his people and presented his prayer to God. Ezra, the priest, on receiving news of the people's sin tells us: "I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God." Daniel, the prophet, when, in the city of idolatry, he heard of the decree forbidding prayer, except to the king, for thirty days, went into his house and "kneeled upon his knees" as before.

But we have still higher authority; for did not Jesus, in the

[1] J. W. Ewing, *The Undying Christ*, 69.

Garden of Gethsemane, withdraw Himself from His disciples a stone's throw and kneel down and pray? And, after Jesus, what a line of men—the greatest, the purest, the tenderest—we see kneeling in prayer. Stephen, with that stony rain beating out his life, kneels down and cries with a loud voice: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Peter, when Dorcas is dead, kneels down and prays for her restoration. And Paul, when bidding farewell to the elders of this very Church, knelt down on the seashore and poured out his heart to God for those he was leaving. Evidently it was the habit of his life.

¶ I was touched by reading yesterday morning of Bishop Latimer, the martyr, that towards the end of his life he used to spend so much time kneeling in prayer that he had to be assisted to rise. He forgot his troubles when pouring out his soul before God. Robert McCheyne spent a large part of his time in prayer. As he said: "Prayer is the link between earth and Heaven." These men stooped to conquer, knelt to prevail, humbled themselves that Christ might be exalted. I pity the man or the nation that knows not how to kneel in prayer to God.[1]

2. Yet no one could be less inclined than Paul to place any emphasis on any possible amount or variety of genuflexion. He knelt, but in assuming that attitude, and in mentioning it, he only gave expression to the humility, the reverence, the earnestness, the concentration of his spirit in devotion. Prayer lies in the heart only, but the words, the attitude, the place, the time, have all their influences directly or indirectly on our heart. We all kneel in private, and no doubt find the attitude helpful, at least to the fixedness of our attention on the work professedly in hand. Would not kneeling in public be equally helpful, and would not its general practice be as seemly as it would be helpful? But, whatever the attitude, let us not forget that the spirit fairly indicated by the Apostle's expression, "I bow my knees," is essential to the validity of prayer.

¶ The old customary, seemly attitude in prayer was standing. So Jesus said when He described the penitent publican, "He stood afar off and prayed"; so when He commanded His disciples and said: "When ye stand praying, forgive!" So in the godly fear of our fathers I still remember the awe that seized me as a boy when the whole great congregation rose to its feet in prayer,

[1] J. W. Ewing, *The Undying Christ*, 71.

when the feeble old man and the frail man lifted their worn faces uncovered in speechless reverence to the eternal light which descended and suffused them with a glory which makes the burnished nimbus with which the painter ever loved to decorate his saint seem tame and tawdry. So when the subject enters the presence of his sovereign he stands, and in the very act and attitude of his homage shows that he is a free-born citizen conscious of his dignity.

But prayer is too large and masterful a thing to be capable of being expressed in any single attitude. There are moments when collective worship is beautiful and seemly, and there are moments when a man is overpowered with a transcendent need and is forced to his knees. The man who is dazzled with excess of light finds that he lives and looks through a medium of vision too perfect for his dim eyes. So the man who for a moment is possessed by a great vision, or is conscious of a great need, may as it were be swept from his feet into the attitude of a suppliant before God. The year when I first entered the University was a year when the most learned of all Scottish thinkers died and passed away. As I saw him he was a frail and shrinking shadow, scarcely equal to the humblest act of articulation, yet round the benches the whisper passed that in strong manhood, when first he came to his Chair and wrestled with the problems of metaphysics, and seemed now and then to wrestle in vain, there would come such a torrent of passion and of intellectual conflict in him, that he would leap from his desk and away from his papers and fall prone before God, that light might come and he might see.[1]

¶ Brother Lawrence told me that it was a great delusion to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times: that we were as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in its season. His view of prayer was nothing else but a sense of the Presence of God, his soul being at that time insensible to everything but Divine Love. When the appointed time of prayer was past, he found no difference, because he still continued with God, praising and blessing Him with all his might, so he passed his life in continual joy; yet hoped that God would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should have grown stronger.[2]

[1] A. M. Fairbairn.

[2] Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, 21.

III.

The Father.

"I bow my knees unto the Father."

1. St. Paul says that he offered his prayer to "the Father." He did not address a material image, a creation of his own fancy, a power, or even "the Divine totality of being." He prayed to a Person. With St. Paul prayer was mind addressing mind; heart pleading with heart.

¶ Madame Blavatsky, the founder of modern Theosophy, was asked: "Do you pray?" "No," she replied, "we do not pray; the only Deity we know is an abstraction. We have no time to kneel to an abstraction." [1]

2. The Authorized Version has an addition which we may well wish we could retain. "Unto the Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" There is something peculiarly tender and winning about this title of God. God is brought very near to us as the Father of Jesus. And we can still cherish that beautiful title, for it is used in several other places.

All nations, all men, who have cultivated religion, have given names and titles to God, in which they have expressed and embodied as well as they could their most exalted ideas concerning God. So the Jew called upon the God of his fathers by the name of Yahveh ("Jehovah"); and in that name called to mind a whole world of plighted troth, of faithfulness and tenderness. So the Moslem, as he tells his beads, recites the names of God, and passes into a kind of ecstasy as he recalls one by one the lofty titles of the beneficence and power of Allah. St. Paul, like all other Christians since, had no personal name for the God whom he adored, no long string of loud-sounding titles. You will not find in the New Testament any mention made of the Supreme Being, of the First Great Cause, of the Architect of the Universe, or anything else in that line. For St. Paul, and for us, God is simply and for ever "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is hardly too much to say, "that is all we know, and all we want to know, of Him."

[1] J. W. Ewing, *The Undying Christ*, 71.

(1) The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ means "the Father" of our Lord's teaching, of those good tidings which He came to bring home to our minds and hearts. That is quite good grammar, and quite good theology. It is (most emphatically) "the Father" of our Lord's discourses and parables; it is the Father of the Prodigal Son, who went forth to meet him while he was yet a long way off, and fell on his neck and kissed him; it is the Father of whom our Lord testified, "I say not unto you that I will pray for you, for the Father himself loveth you"; it is He alone to whom we bow our knees, because we cannot help it, because His goodness and patience and amazing love are too much for us, because they have tamed our pride and broken down our obstinacy, and shamed us out of our indifference; and now we bow our knees to Him in adoring love, even if we have to add, "Father, I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

¶ There are many people nowadays who claim to know "the Father," and in the strength of that knowledge they reject the Saviour, reject the Bible, reject Christianity. Yet it remains absolutely true that the New Testament is the one and only book that ever told them anything worth knowing about "the Father"; it is a fact that "the Father" to whom they bow their knees (if, indeed, they ever bow them at all) belongs exclusively to our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone knew Him; He alone revealed Him. Even they have to come to the Father by Christ: as a matter of history, as a matter of fact; there is no other way. And so their position is this: they embrace with effusion the one great and glorious revelation of the Book, and then they throw the Book aside with contempt; they acknowledge with enthusiasm "the Father" whom Christ (and only Christ) declared unto them, and then they dismiss Christ with scant courtesy.[1]

(2) In the second place, it is impossible to doubt (if we believe Himself) that "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" means more than "the Father" of His discourses, of His gospel. There was an ineffable relationship, a mysterious unity, between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father, which is as strongly marked in His own words as in any creeds which have been made since. Whatever fault may be found with those creeds, they do not assert more strongly than He did Himself a oneness with the

[1] R. Winterbotham.

Father which passes man's understanding; which, assuredly, it had been impossible *for* any other, and intolerable *in* any other to assert.

¶ If we understand that He is indeed the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in such wise that there is absolutely no difference or inequality; that such as the Son is in the Gospels, such is the Father also above us, and such the Holy Spirit within us; even so good, so loving, so pitiful, so faithful and true, so unyielding in the face of wrong, so careful for His own, so just and right in all His ways, so compassionate to error, so grieved for sufferers, so sorrowful for sin even unto death; if we understand *this*, I say, then we believe our Lord's saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (and cannot possibly be mistaken concerning Him), and we bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with the most joyful and complete assurance.[1]

Trust My Father, saith the Eldest-born;
I did trust Him ere the earth began;
Not to know Him is to be forlorn;
Not to love Him is—not to be man.

He that knows Him loves Him altogether;
With My Father I am so content
That through all this dreary human weather
I am working, waiting, confident.

He is with Me; I am not alone;
Life is bliss, because I am His child;
Down in Hades will I lay the stone
Whence shall rise to Heaven His city piled.

Hearken, brothers, pray you, to my story!
Hear Me, sister; hearken, child, to Me:
Our one Father is a perfect glory;
He is light, and there is none but He.

Come then with Me; I will lead the way;
All of you, sore-hearted, heavy-shod,
Come to Father, yours and mine, I pray;
Little ones, I pray you, come to God![2]

3. When St. Paul said, "I call upon the Father," he was not saying a truism; he was striking the note that was distinctive

[1] R. Winterbotham. [2] George MacDonald.

of Christianity. He was saying the very central thing which Christ, our Master, came into the world to say. "I call upon the Father." What does it mean, this belief that God is our Father? We are in the hands of a great power. No one can be such a fool as to think that man is independent. We are in the hands of a vast and universal power on which moment by moment we depend, as for our life originally, so, moment by moment, for the breath we breathe. What is this power? Is it blind force? The Jew alone of all the races was taught to believe that the power which lay behind him was righteousness, and that God was just and righteous; so it was that he set to work to build up the foundations of human society—because he believed that God was righteous, and all this our Lord maintained and deepened. He deepened it into the belief that God was a Father.

(1) That means, first of all, that *God is love*, that behind all the suffering, the misery, the inequality, and the injustice which confront us in this wild and irregular scene of human life, there beats always and everywhere the heart of a Father, the heart of a personal and impartial love. You ask how it was that Christ persuaded men of this truth. It was because of what He was. It was because He was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." If some bright angel had come down from heaven with all the glory of miracles, and had flown to the earth and had proclaimed in a voice of thunder and with works of wonder that God was love, we might have shaken our heads and said, "It is all very curious and mysterious, and it is a very nice thing to listen to, but I know better." Our Lord persuaded men that God was love because He came a man among men, hiding not Himself from His own flesh, moving among men in free and open contact, bearing men's sicknesses and carrying their infirmities; because He went down Himself into the dark valley of failure and suffering; because He bore all the pains of body, all the racking agonies of mind, all the mysterious sense of failure and desolation, that, generation after generation, have turned philanthropists into cynics and made them mad; all the human history that has lain behind that bitter cry of righteous men forsaken—that cry which we hear in the Psalm, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—those words which rang out of the lips of Christ on the Cross.

¶ In our great cities we seem as if we were lost in a crowd. What am I but a tiny little element in some vast human machine that sweeps along in the sway of great forces which move from one end of the industrial world to another and seem to annihilate any sense of the individuality of a single life? It is crushed under the great forces which rush along. So even the old Jew could feel years ago in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where the writer says: "Say not thou, I shall be hidden from the Lord; and who shall remember me from on high? I shall not be known among so many people; for what is my soul in a boundless creation?" We feel it even more in our modern time, but the assurance of Christ is that it is not true; that there is no one of us lost in the crowd; that there is no one of us created by accident; that we were uot turned out in hundreds or in thousands or in nations, that we were created individuals, that God is the Father of each and all; and that behind all the seeming inequalities of position and comfort there is the perfect rectifying justice and equality of God. I believe that God is my Father. That means that He knows all my circumstances, that He values me, not in proportion to my performance, but in proportion to how much I am tried; because, to keep my temper, if I am naturally an angry man, is worth in His sight ten thousand times more than to keep my temper if I am naturally an amiable person without a bad temper to contend with. He knows my circumstances. He knows me and cares about me with the infinite knowledge of the Creator and the Father of everything that goes to make the individuality of my lot, which means the individual love of God.[1]

(2) And then, the Fatherhood of God, St. Paul says, is *the pattern and source of every fatherhood in heaven, and on earth.* It means that God rules by a method of fatherhood. Men are set in groups and societies, and each group and society has one at the head of it, and the model of government is to be fatherhood. So it is in the family, and Christian civilization depends upon maintaining the sanetity and the dignity of the family. To believe in the Fatherhood of God is to set to work to be a good father, a good head of a household in our own families.

¶ The other day I had occasion to find out, in very large works, about a great mass of very intelligent men who were workers there, that they were very unwilling that their wives should know how much money they were getting. I thought

[1] Bishop Gore.

that was a very bad sign. There can be no sound and healthy married life where the wife does not know what money the husband is getting, because there can be no confidence; there can be nothing of that confidence of heart to heart, that real unity of life, that real fellowship and co-operation which means complete trust; and you know we have a great job to-day if we are to restore home life to its proper sanctity and dignity.[1]

¶ Now, look for a moment how the small families of the earth are all made after the fashion of the heavenly family. Did it ever occur to you—surely it must—that God's invention of the family in this world is just to compel our thoughts to rise up to the great Father, and to recognize the great family? Love is the secret of God; love is the creative power. It is symbolized in birth. See how the child comes into the world, dependent on the mother. See how the child has no notion of bliss but in the mother's arms, surrounded with the protection of those arms, looking up into the heaven of her face, reading the infinite in her eyes. The child, I say, is compelled to love the mother. He cannot help himself. Of course, there is the faculty of loving in the child, or else he could not love. It is his Divine nature; he is born of love, and he is love; but it can be brought out only in this way—that he shall, through helplessness, passivity in bliss, feeding on the very body of the mother that bare him, seeking the shelter of her bosom at every dread or anxiety or fear that comes upon him, learn that there is an overshadowing, an upholding love, and that love is his very servant, and, I had almost said, slave. Surely there is no servant in His house like God Himself, for He does everything for His little ones.[2]

IV.

The Families.

"Every family, in heaven and on earth."

1. "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom [not *the whole family*, but] *every family* in heaven and on earth is named." The point of St. Paul's original phrase is somewhat lost in translation. The Greek word for *family* (*patria*) is based on that for *father* (*pater*). A distinguished father anciently gave his name to his descendants; and this paternal name became the bond of

[1] Bishop Gore. [2] George MacDonald.

family or tribal union, and the title which ennobled the race. So we have "the sons of Israel," the "sons of Aaron" or "of Korah"; and in Greek history, the Atridae, the Alcaemonidae, who form a family of many kindred households—a *clan*, or *gens*, designated by their ancestral head. Thus Joseph (in Luke ii. 4) is described as being "of the house and family [*patria*] of David"; and Jesus is "the Son of David." Now Scripture speaks also of *sons of God*, and these of two chief orders. There are those "in heaven," who form a race distinct from ourselves in origin—divided, it may be, amongst themselves into various orders and dwelling in their several homes in the heavenly places, and there are those "on earth."

The various classes of men on earth, Jewish and Gentile, and the various orders of angels in heaven, are all related to God, the common Father, and only in virtue of that relation has any of them the name of *family*. The *father* makes the family; God is the Father of all; and if any community of intelligent beings, human or angelic, bears the great name of *family*, the reason for that lies in this relation of God to it. The significant name has its origin in the spiritual relationship.

This great and noble conception of the unity of heaven and earth in God is characteristic of that form of Christian theology which is illustrated in this Epistle and in the Epistle to the Colossians. It appears elsewhere; but in these two Epistles, which were written about the same time, it is developed with extraordinary boldness and with a vehement and glorious eloquence. As yet, according to Paul's conception, the Divine idea is unfulfilled. Its orderly development has been troubled, thwarted, and delayed by sin, by sin in this world and in other worlds. But it will be fulfilled at last. In Christ "were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him"; and in union with Christ, the eternal Son of God, heaven and earth will be restored to the eternal Father.

¶ During this tour in England (in 1894) Dr. Paton was invited by the Bishop of Durham—the late Bishop Westcott—to visit him at Auckland Castle. Both of the men of God who then met are gone, and we can speak more freely of the event. The Bishop

received his Presbyterian brother as whole-heartedly as if he had been one of his own clergy. The missionary on his part was profoundly moved by the visit, and told his friend subsequently how the Bishop had led him away to his study, and there discussed, with evident eagerness of soul, the progress and hopes of the evangelization of the heathen in the South Sea Islands and in the world. Then they knelt together before God—those two warriors who, in such different fields and circumstances, had fought their great fight and well-nigh finished their course. They recognized that they were one in heart and purpose, and each poured out his soul in fervent petition for the other, and for the bringing in of the Kingdom of God.[1]

¶ Painful as it is to witness the ineffectual yearnings after unity on all hands of which you speak, still it is hopeful also. We may hope that our good God has not put it into the hearts of religious men to raise a prayer for unity without intending in His own time to fulfil the prayer. And since the bar against unity is a conscientious feeling, and a reverence for which each party holds itself to be the truth, and a desire to maintain the faith, we may humbly hope that in our day, and till He discloses to the hearts of men what the true faith is, He will, where hearts are honest, take the will for the deed.[2]

2. The Greek words can grammatically mean only "every family" not "the whole family." All such ideas, therefore, as that angels and men, or the blessed in heaven and the believing on earth, are in view as now making one great family, are excluded. The sense is "the Father, from whom all the related orders of intelligent beings, human and angelic, each by itself, get the significant name of *family*."

¶ In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul lays open a vision of the spiritual origins and influences and issues of things temporal and confirms the truth which lies in the bold surmise of the poet that earth is in some sense a shadow of heaven. Now he sees in the future of the material Temple with its "wall of partition" a figure of the state of the world before the Advent, and then passes to the contemplation of its living antitype, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets with Christ for its head corner-stone. Now he traces in the organization of the natural body the pattern of a glorious society fitly framed together by the ministries of every part, and guided by the animating energy of a

[1] *John G. Paton*, iii. 52.

[2] Cardinal Newman, in *Life of David Brown*, 239.

Divine Head. Now he shows how through the experience of the Church on earth the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the heavenly hierarchy. Now he declares that marriage, in which the distinctive gifts and graces of divided humanity are brought together in harmonious fellowship, is a sign, a sacrament, in his own language, of that perfect union in which the Incarnate Word takes to Himself His Bride, the first-fruits of creation. And so in the paragraph where the text occurs he touches with thankful exultation on the universality of the Gospel, by which the many races of men, Jews and Gentiles—the people and the nations—are reunited, and the purpose of God in the education of the world is at last made clear.

Not in one line but in many; not through a calm, uninterrupted growth but in sorrow and tribulation men were trained in the past—this is his thought—to receive the crowning truth, and justified their training by their faith. By the help of that most signal example we can see how every ordered commonwealth, every bond of kinsmanship, owes its strength to a Divine presence. From the one Father, every fatherhood, every family through which the grace of fatherhood is embodied, derives its essential virtue.[1]

3. Family relationship is therefore a very sacred thing, its root being not in the creation, but in God. And though we shall not find on earth any development worthy of its holy root, nevertheless the flower which fills the world with choicest fragrance is family affection. It is capable of becoming most heavenly, since the Eternal Father is Himself the spring of parental as His Eternal Son is of filial love. Therefore, also, family affections are capable of ceaseless cultivation. There is nothing to hinder family love from becoming evermore deeper, stronger, and lovelier. If it is so strong and so precious among fallen creatures, what must it be among the perfect? If family life on the earth gives rise, as it often does, to a very paradise of courtesies and tender sanctities, what must family life be in the immediate Presence, and under the direct influence, of the Infinite Father and His only begotten Son? Christian parents and their children should know, therefore, that in their families they have not a little world, but a little heaven, to cultivate. Their families derive their distinctions and peculiarities from relations in the Godhead. Their families have names not only in time, but in eternity.

[1] B. F. Westcott, *The Incarnation and Common Life*, 161.

Every family in Christ is named according to its distinction, as a manifestation of a corresponding variety in the Divine Nature.

(1) *The family is a kingdom.*—It is not of our design. It is not of our making. It is not of our choosing. It is not dependent on our pleasure for its continuance. When complete it includes each typical relation of society, the relation of command, of obedience, of fellowship. The members of a family in simple intercourse learn, however imperfectly, the duty of service. The feeling of the family conquers self. It is enough to appeal to the experience of home to refute the cynical assertion that personal interest is man's single or strongest motive. In the family the tenderest affection, the most watchful care, the largest forethought, are lavished, not on the strongest or the most helpful, but rather on the most helpless and weak, who can make no measureable return to their comforters. In the family, need is taken as the measure of help, and a principle is spontaneously acknowledged which in its widest application would be adequate to deal with the sorrows of the world.

¶ On no subject has human thought more centred than upon the family. There is nothing more important in our entire social life. For a nation will not be better than its homes. Christianity did not invent the family or marriage, but it has been probably the greatest agency in giving ideals to the home. This is all the more remarkable when one recalls that Jesus was not married, and that so much of the New Testament literature was written by Paul who, like his Master, had no home. But how incomplete would the gospel be without the figures drawn from fatherhood, sonship, marriage, and childhood! The more one reads the New Testament the more does one feel how sacred the family is, because it so often serves as a symbol of the relations of the Church with Christ. When the New Testament writers wish to express the very closest and holiest union of believers with their Lord it is to the family that they turn for symbols.[1]

(2) *The family is also a school,* a school of character. The outer school cannot mould the whole of man's nature. Character is shaped by action and not by words. What has been learnt by memory must be tested and embodied by experience. Under one aspect the outer school stimulates new and importunate wants, while the home is fitted to bring that social discipline which

[1] Shailer Mathews, *The Social Gospel*, 35.

checks the selfish endeavour to satisfy them. At the same time the school offers new interests which may brighten home. Out of the home, too, must spring the spirit of purity. For home has its own proper warnings when the occasion comes. The knowledge of the elder may guard the innocent from falling; and the young have no better earthly safeguard than to carry with them the thought of mother or sister as the witness of all they do or say or think.

¶ In September I saw a tree bearing roses, whilst others of the same kind, round about it, were barren; demanding the cause of the gardener, why that tree was an exception from the rule of the rest, this reason was rendered: because that alone being clipped close in May, was then hindered to spring and sprout, and therefore took this advantage by itself to bud in autumn. Lord, if I were curbed and snipped in my younger years by fear of my parents, from those vicious excrescences to which that age was subject, give me to have a godly jealousy over my heart, suspecting an autumn-spring, lest corrupt nature (which without Thy restraining grace will have a vent) break forth in my reduced years into youthful vanities.[1]

Ah! not to be happy alone,
Are men sent, or to be glad.
Oft-times the sweetest music is made
By the voices of the sad.
The thinker oft is bent
By a too-great load of thought;
The discoverer's soul grows sick
With the secret vainly sought:
Lonely may be the home,
No breath of fame may come,
Yet through their lives doth shine
A purple light Divine,
And a nobler pain they prove
Than the bloom of lower pleasures, or the fleeting spell of love.[2]

(3) *The family becomes also a sanctuary.*—The splendour of palaces does not secure innocence and holiness within their walls, but a sense of the presence of God does. Where God is welcomed as a guest there an atmosphere of sanctity is diffused around. A

[1] Thomas Fuller, *Good Thoughts in Worse Times.*
[2] Sir Lewis Morris, "Songs of Two Worlds" (*Works*, 68).

witness whose experience is unsurpassed writes: "I know numbers of the prettiest, happiest little homes which consist of a single room." We ask then that His hallowing Presence should be habitually sought. We ask that "daily bread" should be received with some simple words of blessing; that work and rest should be consecrated by some simple words of prayer and praise. In these observances there is nothing forced or unnatural; nothing which is not possible under the commonest outward circumstances; nothing which does not answer to the promptings of the human heart. And for the fulfilment of this desire we claim woman's help. There is a message even for the present age in the fact emphatically recorded by St. John, that a woman was divinely charged to be the first herald of the Resurrection, the herald of the new life.

¶ The need of England, the need of every land, is "good mothers." If they fail, it is not for lack of womanly endowments in those who are called to fulfil the duty. Poor and desolate outcasts, whom we are tempted to place lowest, are capable of every sacrifice to shield their children from bodily suffering or loss. Let them only feel, and let mothers of every class feel, that there are sicknesses of the soul which require the ministries of wise and tender affection, spiritual perils which need to be guarded against by watchful forethought, desires of the heart which crave the fullness of more than human love, and we shall be brought near to the consummation of our daily prayer in the advent of the Kingdom of God.[1]

¶ "Father Endeavour Clark," as the founder of the Christian Endeavour movement is sometimes called, tells the story of a mother, whose family is as remarkable in its influence as that of the Crossleys of Halifax. This is the Murray family of Graaf Reinet, in South Africa. The father of the family, Andrew Murray the first, was a young Scotch missionary. He wooed and won a Dutch girl of Huguenot extraction, and carried her off, a bride of sixteen years, to his parsonage at Graaf Reinet. She became the mother of seventeen children, twelve of whom lived to grow up to bless the world. From them three hundred and four descendants have sprung (including those who have married into the family). The total number of ministers in the family, either directly or by marriage, is forty-two. Three are now studying for the ministry, six are missionaries in Central Africa,

[1] B. F. Westcott, *The Incarnation and Common Life*, 168.

four others are in Mashonaland and the Transvaal, and three in Nyassaland. Three grandsons are in the South African Parliament. Of the original family, five sons were ministers, and the daughters wives of pastors and heads of educational establishments; the most well known, outside of South Africa, by his writings, being the beloved Andrew Murray, his father's namesake. The influence of the whole family in South Africa is incalculable. Never, says Dr. Clark, were children more fortunate in their mother. Hers was one of those sweet, persuasive natures which mould and guide and bless, without seeming to know it themselves, certainly without conscious effort. When asked, "How did you bring up such a wonderful family?" she replied, "Oh, I do not know; I didn't do anything." But every one else knew if she did not. She just lived herself the life she wanted her boys and girls to live. Her life was hid with Christ in God; and they, through her, saw the beauty of holiness. "Her chief characteristic," said one of her children, "was a happy contentment with her lot. She was always exactly where she wished to be, because she was where her Father in heaven had placed her." She outlived her husband by many years. It was felt that her serenity and gentleness and loveliness of character came not a little from the hours of long communion when she looked into the Face of the Invisible, and thus learned to endure as seeing Him.[1]

No clever, brilliant thinker she,
With college record and degree;
She has not known the paths of fame;
The world has never heard her name;
She walks in old long-trodden ways,
The valleys of the yesterdays.

Home is her kingdom, love her dower;
She seeks no other wand of power
To make home sweet, bring heaven near,
To win a smile and wipe a tear
And do her duty day by day,
In her own quiet place and way.

Around her childish hearts are twined,
As round some reverend saint enshrined,
And following hers the childish feet
Are led to ideals true and sweet,
And find all purity and good
In her divinest motherhood.

[1] H. S. Dyer, *The Ideal Christian Home*, 77.

She keeps her faith unshadowed still;
God rules the world in good and ill;
Men in her creed are brave and true
And women pure as pearls of dew,
And life for her is high and grand
By work and glad endeavour spanned.

This sad old earth's a brighter place
All for the sunshine of her face;
Her very smile a blessing throws,
And hearts are happier where she goes;
A gentle, clear-eyed messenger,
To whisper love—thank God for her![1]

4. What a solace to our hearts is the assurance that we shall never cease to be members of a family! The perfection of the great heavenly Household is that it is a Household of households. We are born into a family, we grow up in a family, we die in a family, and after death, we shall not simply go into the great heaven, but to our own family, in our Father's House. "Abraham gave up the ghost, and was gathered *to his people.*" "Thou shalt go to *thy fathers* in peace," God had said to him. All in heaven will not know us, but *our own people* will know us. We shall go to them.

We are but babes in the household of God; and, moreover, we are in a very humble part of His House, rather in an adjoining house than in the very House. But we are loved as babes, by our numerous kindred; and quite as much by our own in heaven as by our own on earth. The sweet affections of our heavenly kindred are ever seeking to reveal themselves in our hearts. What are our family altars but means of communication between families on earth and families in heaven? They unite with us in saying, "Our Father." And in the joy of our fellowship with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ, they joy with us.[2]

¶ The two communities of earth and heaven are united. They, as we, live by derivation of the one life; they, as we, are fed and blessed by the one Lord. The occupations and thoughts of Christian life on earth and of the perfect life of saints above are one. They look to Christ as we do, when we live as Christians, though the sun, which is the light of both regions, shows there a broader disc, and pours forth more fervid rays, and is never obscured by clouds, nor ever sets in night. Whether conscious of

[1] L. M. Montgomery. [2] J. Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, 110.

us or not, they are doing there, in perfect fashion, what we imperfectly attempt, and partially accomplish.[1]

5. But the members of families on the earth should see to it that they are members of the Household of God. Let there be no doubt touching their union with Christ, the First-born Son. Let them have clear evidence that they are born again, and partakers of the Divine Nature. Members of Christian families who are not personally in Christ should lay it to heart that they are not as yet members of any heavenly household, and that they will be separated from their own families, unless they enter in at the door of grace, while they may. Has the door been opened in vain? We have been resting in the affections of our parents and enjoying the comforts of their house; but are we with them in Christ, and members with them of their eternal family?

In one sense, and that a very important one, every family with all its members has God for its Father, for He made all and upholds all; and the thought should be a welcome one, that we share His love with all the world, and yet our own share in His love and His care is none the less, and that the family of God is made up of those who are loved by Him. But there is more than this—the admission into His family implies for us the recovery of a lost privilege. Sin separated and banished us, made us as though we were not God's children, and unwilling to accept the love and the care and the will of God; we needed to be made the Sons of God again, and here came a provision of the Fatherly care which made the limits of the Family as wide as ever; the barrier of enmity was broken down by the great Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Since He died, it is now, not indeed, every one upon earth, but "whosoever will"—every one who feels that he would be a child of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

That we might know Him, Thou didst come and live;
That we might find Him, Thou didst come and die;
The son-heart, Brother, Thy son-being give—
We too would love the Father perfectly,
And to His bosom go back with the cry,
Father, into Thy hands I give the heart
Which left Thee but to learn how good Thou art!

[1] A. Maclaren.

There are but two in all the universe—
The Father and His children—not a third;
Nor, all the weary time, fell any curse!
Not once dropped from its nest an unfledged bird
But Thou wast with it! Never sorrow stirred
But a love-pull it was upon the chain
That draws the children to the Father again!

O Jesus Christ, babe, man, eternal Son,
Take pity! we are poor where Thou art rich:
Our hearts are small; and yet there is not one
In all Thy Father's noisy nursery which,
Merry, or mourning in its narrow niche,
Needs not Thy Father's heart, this very now,
With all his being's being, even as Thou![1]

[1] George MacDonald, *Poetical Works*, ii. 335.

Power in the Inward Man.

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Power in the Inward Man.

I bow my knees unto the Father, . . . that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man.—Eph. iii. 16.

In every sphere of life to-day there is an urgent demand for strength or efficiency. The apostles of physical culture denounce, in large letters, the "crime" of not being strong. Their laudable endeavour is to persuade us to develop our powers by exercise; but they have no gospel for the weak. There are strong-minded men who agree with John Stuart Mill that, notwithstanding all the talk about brain-fag, it would do most people good to use their minds more than they do. And if worry be distinguished from work, it is probably true that increased mental effort would mean, for the majority of people, increased mental power. There is a corresponding truth in the spiritual life, as every Christian knows. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to the harmful effects which are the inevitable result of neglecting to exercise the higher faculties of the soul (v. 11, 14). Though our ears have been opened and we have heard the whisper of His love, we shall become "dull of hearing" unless we listen often and listen long for the still and small and inward voice of His Spirit. Therefore, let us "exercise" ourselves "unto godliness" (1 Tim. ii. 7), but withal let us remember that the central truth of the Christian gospel is not that we are to become strong merely by development of our own powers, by exercise of our own faculties, by conservation of our own energies; if we are to become strong, we must be strengthened by a "power that is not ourselves," and St. Paul can name that power and bear witness to its energizing—it is the power of the Holy Spirit.[1]

[1] J. G. Tasker.

I.

The Desire.

"That ye may be strengthened with power."

1. What shall the universal Father be asked to give to His needy children upon earth? They have newly learnt His name; they are barely recovered from the malady of their sin, fearful of trial, weak to meet temptation. *Strength* is their first necessity: "I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." The Apostle asked them in verse 13, in view of the greatness of his own calling, to be of good courage on his account; now he entreats God so to reveal to them His glory and to pour into their hearts His Spirit, that no weakness or fear may remain in them. The *strengthening* of which he speaks is the opposite of the *faintness of heart*, the failure of courage deprecated in verse 13.

¶ In Paul's opinion a Christian had no right to be weak. To Timothy, his spiritual son, he wrote, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." To the Colossians, "We desire that ye might be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." To the Corinthians, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." And again, to the Ephesians, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." To be strong is a duty; therefore to be weak is a sin. "Why art thou lean, being the king's son?"[1]

2. "Strengthened with power." The word for "power" is familiar to-day in the forms "dynamite," electric "dynamos," etc. It signifies force or energy in an intense degree. We have it in the 19th and 20th verses of the 1st chapter: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead"; and then in the 20th verse of this third chapter: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

[1] D. J. Burrell, *The Religion of the Future*, 14.

¶ I confess that power, the possession of power, is one of the ideas I am trying to master. It seems to be greater every day I live; I am only just beginning to understand it, but Paul says that the power working in us is the power that raised Christ up from the dead. I cling to that thought, because I find that in my weakness and unworthiness I am like Christ in the tomb, and I pray that I may be raised up, out of weakness into strength, out of selfishness into sympathy, out of earth into Heaven. The power is the great power of God, the power of resurrection, the power of "endless life."[1]

3. It was when we were "without strength" that Christ died for the ungodly, and the work of new creation is to restore strength to our thoughts, to our volitions, to our speech, and to our action. He "worketh in us to will, and to do." He kindles within us a flame of spiritual passion, a force of resolution, before which even bars of iron must give way, and which makes us "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." One man in real earnest is a match for a thousand who do not know either their own minds or their Maker's; and while others are putting it to the vote, or seeking authority for reform, or graciously holding that a balance of argument is in favour of the truth of Christianity, he who knows Almighty God, and with whom God dwells, knows the great secret of truth beyond all doubt, speaks not as the scribes, but pushes on the work of God as a soldier who sees victory before him and the Kingdom nigh at hand.

¶ There are important cases in which the difference between half a heart and a whole heart makes just the difference between signal defeat and a splendid victory.[2]

¶ When Palmerston was trying to get Cobden into the Government, and meeting all his objections in a light and airy way, Cobden at length said: "But, my Lord, I am in earnest." That closed the conversation. Palmerston, I should think, would look on earnestness in politics as the one unpardonable sin, as it is often looked upon now.[3]

¶ Take me out of the langour, the irritability, the sensitiveness, the incapability, the anarchy, in which my soul lies, and fill it with Thy fullness. Breathe on me, that the dead bones may live. Breathe on me with that Breath which infuses energy and

[1] J. W. Ewing, *The Undying Christ*, 77.
[2] A. K. H. Boyd.
[3] G. W. E. Russell, *Sir Wilfrid Lawson*, 29.

kindles fervour. In asking for fervour, I ask for all that I can need, and all that Thou canst give; for it is the crown of all gifts and all virtues. It cannot really and fully be, except where all are present. It is the beauty and the glory, as it is also the continual safeguard and purifier of them all. In asking for fervour, I am asking for effectual strength, consistency, and perseverance; I am asking for deadness to every human motive and simplicity of intention to please Thee; I am asking for faith, hope, and charity in their most heavenly exercise. In asking for fervour, I am asking to be rid of the fear of man, and the desire of his praise; I am asking for the gift of prayer, because it will be so sweet; I am asking for that loyal perception of duty which follows on yearning affection; I am asking for sanctity, peace, and joy all at once. In asking for fervour, I am asking for the brightness of the Cherubim and the fire of the Seraphim, and the whiteness of all Saints. In asking for fervour I am asking for that which, while it implies all gifts, is that in which I signally fail. Nothing would be a trouble to me, nothing a difficulty, had I but fervour of soul.

Lord, in asking for fervour, I am asking for Thyself, for nothing short of Thee, O my God, who hast given Thyself wholly to us. Enter my heart substantially and personally, and fill it with fervour by filling it with Thee. Thou alone canst fill the soul of man, and Thou hast promised to do so. Thou art the living Flame, and ever burnest with love of man: enter into me and set me on fire after Thy pattern and likeness.[1]

II.

The Sphere.

"In the inward man."

1. By the "inward man" is meant, not the new creation through faith in Jesus Christ which this Apostle calls "the new man," but simply what Peter calls the "hidden man of the heart," the "soul," or unseen self, as distinguished from the visible material body, which it animates and informs. It is this inward self, then, in which the Spirit of God is to dwell, and into which it is to breathe strength. The leaven is hid deep in three

[1] Newman's Meditations and Devotions, in Ward's *Life of Cardinal Newman*, ii. 367.

measures of meal until the whole is leavened. And the point to note is that the whole inward region which makes up the true man is the field upon which this Divine Spirit is to work. It is not a bit of our inward life that is to be hallowed. It is not any one aspect of it that is to be strengthened; it is the whole intellect, affections, desires, tastes, powers of attention, conscience, imagination, memory, will. The whole inward man in all its corners is to be filled, and to come under the influence of this power, until there be "no part dark, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

¶ The inward man, of which St. Paul speaks as delighting in the law of God, is the moral personality. When the inward man is regenerated, it becomes "the new man"; but before this renewal in the spirit of our mind (Eph. iv. 23), the inward man can recognize the goodness of Him whose holy law is the expression of an ideal, which wins the admiration of him whose failures compel him to cry, "It is high, it is high; I cannot attain unto it." To be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" means therefore the invigoration of our noblest powers, the enriching of the higher self, the imparting of new energy to our whole conscious personal being. The result of the Holy Spirit's energizing is neither the gradual extinction of desire nor the enfeeblement of the will; on the contrary, the Spirit-filled personality desires more ardently and wills more strongly. The difference is that the inward man is no longer "infirm of purpose." All, and more than all, that the wisest ethical teachers intend, when they extol the virtue of self-control, is a gift of grace to those who "walk in the flesh," but "do not war according to the flesh." Those who "walk in the Spirit" also war according to the Spirit, and in the Spirit's strength they are enabled to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5).[1]

¶ The day came when Paul was led out along the road towards Ostia to his execution. There were priests and beggars and Arab merchants and sailors and camel-drivers who turned to look. What they saw was an armed guard with a Jewish culprit in chains; a man of "mean presence" outwardly, but destined to walk through history like a giant. The place was reached; there was the flash of a heavy sword; a head fell from the block. "There's an end of this zealot," said the executioner to his men. Little they knew! The real Paul cannot be slain. He is

[1] J. G. Tasker.

destined to be heard from. The "inner man" will walk up and down in Church councils, a participant in all great theological controversies, until the end of time. His death is but the widening of his parish.

Out of sight sinks the stone
In the deep sea of time, but the circles sweep on![1]

2. Every one has an inward man, a better self, a potential perfection within him, which will awake and begin to flower when he feels in his soul the touch of God. There is laid down in the being of each man, or deposited there in germ, an ideal, a Divine ideal, which ought to become, under the nourishing powers of redemption and providence, the real. The man is not "himself" truly, until he has at least begun to translate the ideal into the real in his daily life. So we read that the prodigal "*came to himself*"; he had been *beside* himself until then, a kind of lunatic. For madness—so saith the Wise Man—is in the heart of the sons of men while they live; he means in sin, and away from God. When they come to God they come to sanity, to self. In fact, coming to one's self in discovery, idea, desire, deep-grasping consciousness, is the first step in the way of return to God and happiness. That hour of full awakening is the supreme season of a man's life. How very far some men seem to be from it! But there is this consolation—that they are not always so far from it as they seem.

¶ Mr. Macgregor's nature presented a union, difficult for those who did not know him to understand, of feeling, of intellect, and strength of will. If feeling "overpowered" him for the moment, it was not suffered to carry him away. No impulse was allowed to master him for which he could not find intellectual justification; and then what he felt and experienced his resolute will turned into a force of life. That these days at Keswick were a turning-point in his life, there is not the smallest doubt. That they made his later ministry what it was, is equally certain. To say that he sometimes appeared to claim for this experience and its effects more than the facts altogether warranted, is only to say that, though remarkably enlightened and strengthened by God's Spirit, he remained a fallible human being. But no one who knew George Macgregor, either as a man or a minister, before that crisis and after it, could question that

[1] D. J. Burrell, *The Religion of the Future*, 15.

he found then a new secret of strength both for his own life, and for his work.[1]

¶ Paul's great solicitude is for the *inner* man; if he can only get *that* strengthened he feels that his work is done. And he is right. The inner man is the metropolis, the capital, the chief city; all the provinces take their tone from there. No man must begin with the provinces if he wants to make his fortune. In vain you adorn the body, in vain you amass the gold, in vain you seek the sights and sounds of beauty; the capital is the heart, and if the fashion of the heart be sombre, the whole is sad. But if the fashion of the heart be bright, I have no fear for the provinces; these will soon follow. The body may be meanly clad, the gold may be scarce and dim, the sights and sounds of beauty may be shut out by lane and alley, but if in the heart there be voices of laughter, they will fill all the land. If there be songs in the metropolis, I shall not be able to keep down my singing. I shall sing through all the provinces; I shall sing in the cold and in the snow; I shall sing in the dark and in the rain; I shall sing amid my struggles for daily bread. The life of joy is everywhere when there is gladness in the inner man.[2]

3. How then is the discovery made? How does a man reach the centre and fountain of his own being? find himself? recover himself? bring himself home again to God? There are very great varieties of experience. But perhaps these things, or something like them, will be found in all.

(1) First, there is what may be called a *soul consciousness*—a consciousness of having, or being, a soul; not merely an animated something, to be covered with dress and beautified with manners; not merely a thinking something, to be informed by knowledge and guided by morals; but a something spiritual, vast, deep, related to eternity, related to God.

(2) The next thing is *the conscious relation to God.* No sooner does a man become conscious of his true self than he in that very act becomes cognizant and sensible of God. Some philosophic thinkers say that the deep and true self-consciousness is also, in a sense, consciousness of God—that we are so related to the Infinite that we cannot become conscious of our truest selves without touching and feeling it, without touching and feeling God.

(3) The third thing, or the thing which goes along with this

[1] *Life of George H. C. Macgregor, M.A.*, 110.

[2] G. Matheson, *Voices of the Spirit*, 219.

very often, is *the consciousness of sin*—"I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." When the inward man is found, sin is found *in* it, or cleaving to it very closely. Yes, real sin, deep, soul-humbling sin. Not merely infirmity, mistake, and misadventure; but *sin*, which makes the sinner guilty, which makes him unworthy of kindness, worthy of wrath.

(4) Then, further, *he becomes conscious of goodness as well as of sin.* Not the old formal goodness; but goodness that is fresh and new and living; with love in the heart of it, gratitude lending it a glow and a lustre, faith building it up. This new life of goodness begins just with the other things we have named. Not after them, but with and in them. We are too apt to conceive of the religious life as consisting in a series of consecutive exercises, the beginning of the one waiting for the completion of the other. First repentance, then cleansing and forgiveness, then gratitude, then filial love, then active goodness. Not so. The moment a man comes to himself, all these things begin together, and go on together.

¶ Some trees in early spring are yet covered with last year's leaves; all withered now and begrimed. What says the new vegetation to these? "I must wait until God sends winds strong enough to sweep them away; rains heavy enough to wash the tree clean in every branch"? Not at all. That new vegetation, that fresh leafage, comes out and pushes them off, and clothes the tree with virgin green, drawing food and beauty from the mould of the earth, from the wandering wind, from the passing cloud. So goodness throws off sin, and dresses and adorns the soul in the beauties of God's holiness.[1]

III.

The Agent.

"Through his Spirit."

1. In comparing the characters of Greek and Roman story described in Plutarch's "Lives" with those depicted in unfading colours in the Old and New Testaments, one feels that both of these great picture galleries are filled with portraits of men of

[1] A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, 9.

immense strength and resolution. But there is this difference, that in Plutarch's heroes the human element of strength is supreme, while in the Scripture biographies there is added a Divine element of spiritual and moral power arising from vital contact with the Infinite and Eternal God—a spiritual power almost unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and producing types of men and women who seem to belong to another species through their union with the spiritual realms. This contrast is seen at a glance when we compare the heroes of Homer and of the Greek tragedians with those of the historical books of the Bible, or the poems of Greece and Rome with the remains of Hebrew song collected in the Book of Psalms. Aristotle himself says, when speaking of men's relation to the gods, that all Greece would laugh if any man were to say that he loved Jupiter. How different the tone of David! "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength"; "I will sing praise to my God while I have any being."

The expression in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, chosen as the text of this sermon, describes the quality of such souls. They were "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." It is by no merely natural decision or force of character that men and women are made conquerors of death and time. Such new force, exhibiting itself in unfashionable faith, in thought, in purpose, in action, in speech, in suffering, in sacrifice, in love, is the work of that Almighty Spirit from which all forms of energy proceed, but whose chief work in the universe is the creation of inspired character.

¶ Every month seems to reveal to us more fully, in the progress of scientific discovery, the wonderful nature of the invisible energies which pervade and animate the material universe, until we look almost with speechless astonishment at the men whose experimental gifts, and mysterious insight, and mathematical grasp of thought, have unveiled the action of these interior energies of heat, and light, and electricity, and magnetism, and chemical affinity, and subdued them in practical forms to the service of man in the modern world. Hear the words of Dr. Crooke, spoken to his Company on opening the electric light for Ladbroke Square last week: "Before finishing I just want to draw your attention to a little bit of philosophy. We ought to have some philosophy in an electric light installation. Millions of years ago the sun shone upon the earth; plants grew; they died,

and were converted in the course of time into coal. The light of the sun which was shining then was transformed into the latent energy of the coal. That coal has been dug up millions of years afterwards, and is forming the fire under the boiler. The heat of the coal is raising the steam, which, thus produced, passes through the engine and is being converted into motion. That motion is being communicated to the armature of the dynamo, which produces magnetism, and this, in its turn, produces electricity. The electricity is conducted into the secondary batteries and is there changed into chemical action. This chemical action is reconverted into electric current in the mains, and when human brains and energy are employed to direct the current in the right direction, the ultimate result is evident to you in the form of light. This light is the identical energy of the sun, bottled up in the coal measures countless ages ago, and now reproduced after having undergone more strange transformations than were ever dreamed of in fairyland."

But we live in the midst of still sublimer manifestations of one and the self-same Spirit, in His dealings, not with matter, but with souls—in the work of renewing them in the image of God, to an endless life, a life as indestructible as the Divine. For it is never to be forgotten that it is one and the self-same Spirit who has governed the geological and zoological development of this globe with its physical forces in the past eternities, in whose hand have been the deep places of the earth, and who has directed the gradual evolution of all living things. It is the same almighty Spirit who is now occupied in the work of saving men by "creating them anew" in the image of God for life everlasting; and whose far more mysterious and glorious energies are employed in "strengthening with might the inner man" for an endless life of power, obedience, and love. "Now if any man have not this Spirit of Christ he is none of his."[1]

2. Nothing is more familiar in Scripture than the conception of the indwelling Spirit of God as the source of moral strength. The special power that belongs to the gospel Christ ascribes altogether to this cause. "Ye shall receive power," He said to His disciples, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Hence is derived the vigour of a strong faith, the valour of the good soldier of Christ Jesus, the courage of the martyrs, the cheerful and indomitable patience of multitudes of obscure sufferers for righteousness' sake.

[1] Edward White.

¶ God will show him—if a man wishes to be like Christ, and to work like Christ, at doing good; God will teach him and guide him in all puzzling matters. And do not be afraid of being called cowards and milksops for bearing injuries patiently; those who call you so will be likely to be the greatest themselves. Patience is the truest sign of courage. Ask old soldiers who have seen real war, and they will tell you that the bravest men, the men who endured best, not in mere fighting, but in standing still for hours to be mowed down by cannon shot; who were most cheerful and patient in shipwreck, and starvation, and defeat—all things ten times worse than fighting—ask old soldiers, I say, and they will tell you that the men who showed best in such miseries, were generally the weakest men in the whole regiment; that is true fortitude; that is Christ's image—the meekest of men, and the bravest too.[1]

¶ There is a great truth expressed when we describe a brave and enterprising man as a *man of spirit*. All high and commanding qualities of soul come from this invisible source. They are inspirations. In the human will, with its *vis vivida*, its elasticity and buoyancy, its steadfastness and resolved purpose, is the highest type of force and the image of the almighty Will. When that will is animated and filled with "the Spirit," the man so possessed is the embodiment of an inconceivable power. Firm principle, hope and constancy, self-mastery, superiority to pleasure and pain—all the elements of a noble courage are proper to the man of the Spirit. Such power is not neutralized by our infirmities; it asserts itself under their limiting conditions and makes them its contributories. "My grace is sufficient for thee," said Christ to His disabled servant; "for power is perfected in weakness."[2]

¶ If we say that a man is remarkable for his intellectual energy, we think of him as having in the very centre of his intellectual life a free and inexhaustible fountain of force and activity. It is the same in the spiritual life. There is a certain imperfection in many of us which I do not know how to describe except by saying that, though at times particular spiritual faculties may appear to be vigorous, the central life is weak. There are men whose zeal for the evangelization of the world is often very real and very fervent, but who give us no impression of spiritual strength. There are others who are often inspired with a passion for Christian perfection, but in them too there appears to be no real vigour. There are others who seem spiritually

[1] Charles Kingsley. [2] G. G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 187.

weak, though their vision of spiritual truth is very keen and penetrating. There are others who seem capable of very lofty devotion,—of awe, of vehement religious emotion, of rapture in the Divine love and in the hope of glory, honour, and immortality —and who yet give us the impression that they are wanting in those elements of life which constitute spiritual energy. In every one of these cases, to use language which suggests rather than expresses the truth, the vigour is derived not from the central fountains of life, but from springs that are more or less distant from the centre. The man himself is wanting in force though there are spiritual forces at work in him. Those of us who are conscious that this is our condition should pray to God that we "may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man."[1]

¶ Robertson Smith returned to Cambridge for the decisive consultation of his doctors, and the story of what passed may be given here in the words of the Master of Christ's. "Half the members of the Conference [of Orientalists] had been invited to spend the Saturday and Sunday at Cambridge, and as usual Smith was the centre around which they all moved. From the bustle and confusion of tongues he withdrew to meet the doctors, and as usual he insisted on knowing the whole truth. When he left the room he turned to me and said, 'I know what that means. My brother died of it.' He then returned to his guests, and that evening presided at a banquet given in their honour in the Hall of Christ's, but never by a word or a sign did he let any one suspect what he had learned but an hour or two before from the doctors, and it was with the same magnificent courage that he bore the ceaseless suffering and gradually increasing weakness of the next eighteen months."

What Smith had learned from the doctors was indeed sufficient to try his heroism. It was now ascertained with as much clearness as is possible in such matters that the real cause of the discomfort and illness which had crippled him for so long was deep-seated tuberculosis.[2]

3. The very name of the Spirit is the "Spirit of might." Christ spoke to us about being "endued with power from on high." The last of His promises that dropped from His lips upon earth was the promise that His followers should receive the power of the Spirit coming upon them. Wheresoever in the early histories we read of a man that was full of the Holy Ghost,

[1] R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, 246.

[2] *The Life of William Robertson Smith*, 543.

we read that he was "full of power." According to the teaching of this Apostle, God hath given us the "spirit of power," which is also the spirit "of love and of a sound mind." So the strength that we must have, if we have strength at all, is the strength of a Divine Spirit, not our own, that dwells in us, and works through us.

¶ There is in the human heart an inextinguishable instinct, the love of power, which, rightly directed, maintains all the majesty of law and life, and misdirected, wrecks them.

Deep rooted in the innermost life of the heart of man, and of the heart of woman, God set it there, and God keeps it there.—Vainly, as falsely, you blame or rebuke the desire of power!—For Heaven's sake, and for man's sake, desire it all you can. But *what* power? That is all the question. Power to destroy? the lion's limb, and the dragon's breath? Not so. Power to heal, to redeem, to guide and to guard. Power of the sceptre and shield; the power of the royal hand that heals in touching,—that binds the fiend, and looses the captive; the throne that is founded on the rock of Justice, and descended from only by steps of Mercy.[1]

(1) That indwelling Spirit will be a power for *suffering*.—The parallel passage to this in the twin Epistle to the Colossians is—"strengthened with all might unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Unless this Divine Spirit were a power for patience and endurance it were no power suited to us poor men. So dark at times is every life—so full at times of discouragements, of dreariness, of sadness, of loneliness, of bitter memories, and of fading hopes does the human heart become—that if we are to be strong we must have a strength that will manifest itself chiefly in this, that it teaches us how to bear, how to weep, how to submit.

¶ Ill-health was Stevenson's always, but what he accomplished in the way of letters surpasses in amount and scope that which many a stronger man has done. It amounted to "nearly four hundred pages a year for twenty years," and of the conditions under which most of it was done he wrote to Mr. George Meredith in 1893:

"For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my day unflinchingly. I have written in bed and written out of it; written in hæmorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so

[1] Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, ii. §§ 86, 87 (*Works*, xviii. 137).

long it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well is a trifle, so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle."[1]

(2) And it will be a power for *conflict*.—We have all of us, in the discharge of duty and the meeting of temptation, to face such tremendous antagonisms that unless we have grace given to us which will enable us to resist, we shall be overcome and swept away. God's power from the Divine Spirit within us does not absolve us from, it fits us for, the fight. It is not given in order that holiness may be won without a struggle; it is given to us in order that in the struggle for holiness we may never lose "one jot of heart or hope," but may be "able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

¶ The battle of life is a common phrase which, as generally used, means the struggle for bare existence in which the lives of so many are spent, or the effort to get on in the world by making money or attaining positions of eminence in society. The Apostle Paul's idea of the life battle is very different, it is higher, nobler, in every way better; because it is no selfish conflict, it is a fighting for God and for the cause of God. The world's battle of life is little better than a war of plunder, a fighting amongst beasts of prey, in which the strong endeavour to crush the weak, and the weak make desperate efforts against the strong—for the most part a mean and miserable contention on both sides, and one in which falsehood and trickery and cruelty and all other base stratagems are, without scruple, resorted to; so that, as a rule, those who win have more reason to be ashamed of themselves than those who lose. St. Paul's battle of life is waged in the interests of humanity, the laws of the warfare being strictly honourable, and its aim the establishment throughout the world of that Kingdom which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."[2]

(3) It is a power for *service*.—"Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." There is no such force for the spreading of Christ's Kingdom, and the witness-bearing work of His Church, as the possession of this

[1] J. A. Hammerton, *Stevensoniana*, 313.

[2] Hugh Stowell Brown, in *Life*, by W. S. Caine, 305.

Divine Spirit. Plunged into that fiery baptism, the selfishness and the sloth which stand in the way of so many of us are all consumed and annihilated, and we are set free for service because the bonds that bound us are burnt up in the merciful furnace of His fiery power.

¶ If we allow the record of St. Paul's experience in Christian service to cast light upon his prayer, we see that to be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" means the supply of energy which enables us to toil for Christ without spiritual exhaustion, and to bear one another's burdens, for His sake, without so soon becoming faint and weary. "Wherefore, we faint not," exclaims St. Paul. Christian workers need, in hours of disappointment, to remember his secret. Discouragement in the Master's service cannot always be cured by greater diligence. To labour hard, even for Him, is no guarantee of happiness. Indeed, the higher the service, the deeper will be our dejection if we fail to lay hold of the hope set before us in our glorious calling, because the task assigned proved to be beyond our strength.

> Happy we live, when God doth fill
> Our hands with work.

If that were the only condition, most Christians could be happy every day and happy all the day. But our realization of the Beatitude depends, not upon the filling of our hands with work, but upon the filling of our hearts with zeal.

> Happy we live, when God doth fill
> Our hands with work, *our hearts with zeal.*

Significantly we speak of being "disheartened" in our work for Christ; our use of the word should warn us against allowing the inward altar-fires to die down, or even to burn low. Without the Holy Spirit's strengthening with power in the inward man, it is impossible for the heart to be always as full of zeal as the hands are full of work.

> The sum of all is—Yes, my duty is great:
> My faith's still greater; then my faith's enough.[1]

¶ John MacNeil had always watched himself with considerable jealousy lest the fire within him should burn less brightly as he grew older. It distressed him to see many men, who in their youth had been ardent spirits, gradually cool off into a

[1] J. G. Tasker.

prudent moderatism. "Shall I ever get like that?" he would ask. "Is it *necessary* for a man's ardour to decrease as his years increase?" and then, answering his own question, would reply emphatically—"*No! by God's grace*, I will not alter if I live to be eighty; people will be as glad to come and hear me when I preach leaning on a staff, as they are now." It was a great comfort to him to run over the long list of honourable names of white-haired old men who are serving God as enthusiastically now as when their blood ran faster in their veins. It was one great charm in John MacNeil that he never *did* alter. He was the same at forty as at twenty. In him "zeal" never "curdled into ambition," nor did his enthusiasm ever abate. He was the same eager, hopeful, courageous soul from beginning to end.[1]

IV.

The Measure.

"According to the riches of his glory."

1 "According to the riches of his glory"—that is the measure. There is no limit except the uncounted wealth of His own self-manifestation, the flashing light of revealed Divinity. Whatsoever there is of splendour in that, whatsoever there is of power there, in these and in nothing on this side of them lies the limit of the possibilities of a Christian life.

"The riches of his glory"! How sublime a conception! We are not to ask according to the strength of our faith, the largeness of our hearts, or the breadth of our thoughts, but "according to the riches of his glory"! Paul wants us to take time and think of the glory, and of its inconceivable riches, and then in faith to expect that God will do nothing less to us than according to the riches of that glory. What is to be done in our inward man is to be in very deed the glory of God shining into our heart, and manifesting the riches of His power in what He does there within us. Our faith dare not expect the fulfilment of the prayer until it enters into and claims to the full that God will do in us "according to the riches of his glory." Let us take time and see that nothing less than this is to be the measure of our faith.

[1] *John MacNeil, Evangelist in Australia*, 207.

2. And what are the riches of God's glory? Who of us can conceive them? Think of the riches of God's material glory. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The gold mines and the forests, the gardens and the prairies, the mountains and the seas are all God's. The stars in the heavens, the Milky Way, the Southern Cross, are a part of His glory, for the material universe reveals the wisdom of His handiwork. But that is only the threshold of God's glory. Think of the glory of God's providence, of God's word, of God's grace, of God's Son! Who can conceive the power, and the majesty, and the love, and the compassion of God? And all these are included in "the riches of his glory."

¶ I seem to stand beside a great sea, a sunlit sea, with wave upon wave, wave upon wave of glory rolling in upon my soul. The resources of God are infinite, and in Christ they are all open to us. Truly, when we pray we may say:

> We are coming to a King,
> Large petitions let us bring.[1]

3. We may speak of the riches of God under three aspects—first, the riches of His power; second, the riches of His wisdom; and third, the riches of His goodness; and, as it is the blended and harmonious attributes of God that make up His highest glory, the view of His riches under these three aspects may enable us to see something of the riches of His glory.

(1) His *Power*.—We see the riches of His power in creation. If a man could create in the highest sense of the word, how rich he would soon become! For his own wants he would have an immediate supply. When he was hungry he could create bread. When he was thirsty he could make the pure fountain spring up by his side. When he wanted money he could turn everything he touched into gold. It is in the ability to produce that the source of wealth is found.

The riches of God are seen in the preservation of all things in existence as well as in their creation. The sublime act of creation did not exhaust or weary God. From day to day, from year to year, and from century to century, the whole universe is upheld in its primeval freshness and power. The sky is still the "unworn

[1] J. W. Ewing, *The Undying Christ*, 75.

sky," and time writes no wrinkles on the azure brow of the sea The seasons revolve, and the earth teems every year with beauty and plenty.

And the riches of the Divine power are seen not only in creation and preservation, but in re-creation. We are taught in Scripture that a wondrous transformation must pass over the present world—that forms of being now around us will be dissolved in a deluge of fire, and that from this second deluge will emerge a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. We are also taught that the bodies of men will be raised from the dust of the ground in a new and higher form. What marvellous exhibitions, then, has the future still in store of the riches of the power of God!

¶ I have read Carlyle's "Reminiscences." They remind me of an apple I have just been trying to eat—very sound on the one side, on the other bruised and black. What a pity Froude persisted in thrusting it in the public face, and that he did not help to let the dead bury its dead! Carlyle had certainly a morbid nature, partly, I suppose, from dyspepsia, and partly from having set himself to expose wrong as the exclusive business of his life, and weakness and incapacity were in his philosophy forms of wrong. We may be thankful that we have a better standard in the Infinite Strength that stooped to weakness to pity and to raise it. I should be far from saying that Carlyle had not the Christian in him, but he wanted one part of it, and it is proof of an entirely original and Divine Being, that the Reminiscences of the Fishermen of Galilee give us One who had the most perfect purity, with the most tender pity—an unbending strength that never despised weakness.

One of the false things of the day is to exalt power (including intellect as a form of power) at the expense of the moral and spiritual. It belongs to materialism and in a degree to pantheism, and it is the direct opposite of Christianity, which makes Christ lay power aside, in order to make the centre of the universe self-sacrifice and love; and that then power should gravitate to this centre because it is the only safe one. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power." When we begin to see this, we feel in our deepest nature that it is Divine—that this must be true if the universe has any meaning, and the soul a worthy end. It gets obscured sometimes, but it will come out again.[1]

[1] *Letters of John Ker*, 330.

¶ A ship was rounding Cape Horn, where, as you may know, on account of the fogs and storms, the sun may not appear in view for many days together. The ship of which I am speaking had encountered violent storms; the weather was intensely cold, so that icicles were hanging from the mast and yard-arms. A sailor boy was ordered out upon one of the yard-arms to reef a sail; but as he was out there, hanging over the dark and stormy sea, he raised a cry that his hands were getting benumbed and that he was about to fall. The captain, a relative of his own, shouted to him to hold on, and seizing a piece of rope lying on the deck ran up the rigging, went out on the yard and lashed the boy to it until he could be rescued. When the captain was tying the rope round the body of the lad, he said: "If you ever prayed in your life, pray now." "I cannot pray," said the boy, "but I can sing." And there, over that wild sea, the boy sang this verse of the paraphrase—

His voice commands the tempest forth,
And stills the stormy wave;
And though His arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save.

That sea captain is a member of this congregation, and that sailor boy was taught in our own Sabbath school.[1]

¶ A close, attentive study of Watts's picture of "The All-pervading" will throw some light upon its meaning. All the immeasurable expanse of space is pervaded by a Divine Element, which Watts depicts as a figure with great encircling wings, seated and holding in its lap a globe, representing the stellar universe. Nothing could be more impressive and awe-inspiring than the sense of the overwhelming vastness and ubiquity of this Divine Element throughout the world which is given in this picture. It penetrates to the essence of everything; it holds everything from the largest to the smallest within its mighty grasp. It is a sublime conception that a Personality is seated on the throne of universal empire. We must postulate Spirit and not a thing as the first formative causation. The universe is not self-created and self-upheld. A thing cannot originate a thing. Law is a necessity of things, but law is an expression of will. It is not eternal, self-enacting, self-executing. The laws of the universe presuppose an agent, since they are only the modes in which the agent operates. They cannot be the cause of their own observance. The All-Pervading is Spirit which includes, but is not limited to Personality. The Creator and Upholder of all things is not a

[1] *Robertson of Irvine* (by A. Guthrie), 90.

mere metaphor for force. And thus we are brought back to the magnificent generalization of the artist in his most original picture.[1]

(2) His *Wisdom.*—How manifest are the traces of God's wisdom in the way in which the earth has been fitted to develop and support man, and in the manifold provision made for man's education and comfort! But what we have to notice more particularly here is, not merely the wisdom of God, but the riches of His wisdom; and these are seen not only in the original adaptation of means to ends, but in the way by which God can bring good out of evil. The mechanist would be wise who could invent and construct a machine which by the simplest movements could produce mighty results; but he would be rich in wisdom, who, out of that same machine, when marred and broken, could produce still mightier results.

God's wisdom is seen in making all things work together for good; and what a wealth of wisdom is implied in bringing out of the most contradictory and deleterious elements a vast, harmonious and unspeakably valuable result!

We are broken on the wheel; torn by tribulation; beaten and shaken and purified by sorrow; emptied from vessel to vessel; passed from process to process;—the design of the whole being to bring us forth at last like the snowy sheet of paper; and not only so, but to impress upon us also the very thoughts of God, that we may thereafter circulate through the universe, "living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men." "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

¶ While the adaptations of natural life are comprehended under the term "Sophia," or the wisdom of God, the adjustments of the spiritual life and its laws and development are what is called by the apostles the all-varied wisdom of God. I am sorry that I cannot translate the Greek word better—I know what it means, and what it does not mean. It does not mean that the manifestation of God which we call His wisdom is variegated like a Joseph's coat of many colours, patched up out of many fabrics, both old and new, and often self-discordant, because the new agreeth not with the old. It does mean that there is an ever-changing diversity in the Divine wisdom and work which glows

[1] Hugh Macmillan, *G. F. Watts*, 191.

and gleams like a fine opal in the light, or like an ancient glass vessel from Cyprus or Phœnicia, when all the finer harmonies of the solar spectrum are unceasingly at play. And it is true of the Church as well as of the world that the Never-Changing One is to be sought in the Ever-Changing Many. That His wisdom should baffle our knowledge is what we have a right, *a priori*, to expect, and especially when we are contemplating it on the side where it seems to be many and not one.[1]

¶ The God of Hegel is not the Big Man of the nursery imagination, making the Universe with His hands, as the child makes its mud-pies or its sand-castles. "We cannot suppose God making the world like a mason."

"God is spirit, and the life of spirit is thought. Creation, then, is thought also; it is the thought of God. God's thought of the Creation is evidently the *prius* of the creation; but with God, to think must be to create, for He can require no wood-carpentry or stone-masonry for this purpose; or even should we suppose Him to use such, they must represent thought, and be disposed on thought."[2]

(3) His *Goodness*.—We may use the term goodness as a general expression to embrace the mercy, the compassion, the benignity, and the love of God. All the attributes of God culminate in love. God is first and last a God of love. The whole universe and the plan of redemption are summed up in love. It is the want of love, it is selfishness and hatred, that are the curse and woe of the world. God comes to fill up the sorrowful void with His own rich heart.

Pre-eminently in the work of redemption do we see the riches of His goodness. There we behold God not only working and waiting, but making a great sacrifice for the salvation of man. We can never understand what it cost God to save the world. We read that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; but how little do we know of all that lies in that declaration! How little do we know of the greatness of that gift and of the depth of that sacrifice! How little do we know of that mystery of sorrow which seems to enter into the very Godhead!

"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *The Guiding Hand of God*, 17.

[2] *James Hutchison Stirling, His Life and Work*, 160.

and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

¶ Salvation is not forgiveness of sin: it is not the remission of a penalty: it is not a safety. No, it is the blessed and holy purpose of God's love accomplished in the poor fallen creature's restoration to the Divine image. And to this end is the news of God's love in this great work declared to men, that they hearing it may have confidence in Him who hath thus loved them, and so open their hearts to let in His Spirit. So we have no need now to go out of our nature to meet God, and to get the eternal life, for God is in our own flesh, and the eternal life is in our own flesh, and we have but to know this loving God, and the longings of His heart over us, and to give Him our confidence in order to receive His Spirit into us.[1]

O Slain for love of me, canst Thou be cold,
  Be cold and far away in my distress?
  Is Thy love also changed, growing less and less,
That carried me through all the days of old?
O Slain for love of me, O Love untold,
  See how I flag and fail through weariness:
  I flag, while sleepless foes dog me and press
On me: behold, O Lord, O Love, behold!
I am sick for home, the home of love indeed—
  I am sick for Love, that dearest name for Thee:
Thou who hast bled, see how my heart doth bleed:
Open thy bleeding Side and let me in:
O hide me in Thy Heart from doubt and sin,
  O take me to Thyself and comfort me.[2]

[1] Erskine of Linlathen. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

Christ in the Heart.

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Christ in the Heart.

I bow my knees unto the Father, . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.—Eph. iii. 17.

1. This is the central petition of the Apostle's prayer—"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." We may be inspired by the memory of Christ, to determine that we will be more lowly, more earnest, more faithful, more fervent in spirit; that we will strive to be more like Him, kind and forgiving to others, trying to bless and do them good, and we may succeed and get a great deal of happiness from our resolve and endeavour. But we have not reached the centre of Christian joy and hope and strength until Christ dwells in our hearts by faith; that is, until He becomes a living reality to us, and not only a living reality but a close reality; until we can say in our measure, what the writer of this letter says in another place, "Christ liveth in me"; until our rejoicing is not over One who was born and lived and died, and the influence of whose life and work has blessed mankind beyond all measure, not over One who triumphed over His enemies and is raised to a throne of glory, but over One who, in addition to all these, lives near us and in us, sharing our burdens and joys, and ruling our lives with His living will.

¶ The indwelling Christ was a far greater and more wonderful thing to Paul than the birth at Bethlehem. He is never lost in wonder at that, he says very little about it. He seems to be lost in the far greater wonder that the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Nazareth lives and speaks to men and rules their spirit with His, and is so near to them that His person is more real than their own, and they are more conscious of Christ than of themselves. So this man said, "I no longer live, Christ liveth in me, my will is merged in His, and my whole being is enveloped in His."[1]

[1] C. Brown, *God and Man*, 55.

¶ Let us examine our faith in Christ by this text. Does He dwell in us by our faith? If He does not, our faith is vain. It will not benefit us to call Him Lord, Lord, if He does not rule as Lord over the inward man. He is truly the Saviour of men; but He has no other way of saving men than by acquiring whole and sole dominion in the house of the soul. If another spirit of life than His reigns within us, we may call Him Saviour, but He is not *our* Saviour. The only salvation which we want is salvation from the spirit of our own life, for we are exposed to hell, only because another spirit than that of God's only Son prevails in us, and no one can live in Heaven, unless the Son of God be his life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."[1]

If thou couldst empty all thyself of self,
  Like to a shell dishabited,
Then might He find thee on the Ocean shelf,
  And say—"This is not dead,"
And fill thee with Himself instead.

But thou art all replete with very *thou*,
  And hast such shrewd activity,
That, when He comes, He says—"This is enow
  Unto itself—'Twere better let it be:
It is so small and full, there is no room for Me."[2]

2. In these central words of his great prayer, the Apostle teaches his Ephesian converts that the Gospel is to be found not in outward observances, but in the purity and Christlike holiness of the inward spiritual life. In every age this spiritual life has been in danger of extinction through the pressure of material influences swathing and crushing it with the coarse sensual bonds of outward forms; sometimes in the shape of superstition, sometimes in that of gross carnality, sometimes—and more especially in days like ours—in the shape of mere personal self-indulgence and comfort. It is always the tendency of ordinary men to turn away from the more refined and subtle beauty of the spiritual life and seek refuge in the tangible, the visible, the material, too often adopting, as the outward form, the product of some false extraneous idolatry, borrowed from a world that could no longer retain God

[1] John Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, 116.
[2] T. E. Brown, *Old John and Other Poems*, 151.

in its thoughts. The Jews were in constant danger of yielding to idolatry and sensuality through the pressure and bad example of surrounding nations, against which they were not firm enough to maintain the pure faith of their father Abraham. Pass into Church history, and you will find that the Christian Church has been constantly exposed to the full force of the same temptations. At this very day there are old pagan superstitions which linger in many parts of Christendom, and veil their real heathen character under the pretext of some Christian sense or application. Too often the historians of the Church have found it almost impossible to trace out the hidden stream of spiritual life, overshadowed as it was by the oppressive influence of a vast external system, which occupied the eye and filled the attention, yet destroyed religion by its fatal combination of an elaborate ceremonial with lamentable sensuality, amidst which purity of life and the spirit of self-sacrifice were blotted out and forgotten. When such times were at the worst God sent the reformer; and the message of all reformers who are worthy of the name has always been to proclaim that the spirit is incomparably more important than the framework, that it is a fatal mistake to sacrifice the end to the means, and that faith and holiness are the proper objects and the true characteristics of the Christian. Such declarations have in darker ages seemed like fresh epiphanies of Christ, bringing men back from the oppressive weight of an immoral religion to a new and keen sense of those eternal realities—faith in Christ, trust in His mercy, purity of heart, and righteousness of conduct.

There are at least three kinds of external or material influences by which the life of the spirit may be stifled and destroyed; superstition, sensuality, and worldly self-indulgence. These three causes of mischief may mix and intertwine with a wonderful complexity. It is one of the favourite devices of sensuality to try to silence the voice of conscience by the use of superstitious observances. Superstition cannot save its votaries from carnal tendencies. There is a dangerous attractiveness in easy lives of calm enjoyment and self-satisfied comfort which is most injurious to the religious character, and may destroy any good resolutions we have formed to serve God faithfully at all costs and hazards, and to be tempted aside by nothing whatever that would interfere with the service of God.

(1) *Superstition.*—Superstition is a vice of many forms, and may be found where its presence is least suspected. For instance, what shall we call the watchwords and shibboleths of parties? Idolatry means the substitution of the image for the reality. It denotes worship rendered to the creature instead of the Creator. Is it not idolatry, then, to put such trust as amounts to a kind of worship in mere forms of words of man's devising, the dead phrases which were once the war-cries of great contests, but are now mere excuses for a self-delusion which substitutes the worthless profession of the lips for the living faith of Christ dwelling in our hearts? But the error goes beyond the words of man's devising. We may turn the inspired words of Scripture itself into idols, if we use them as the symbols of a party, like the colours of a regiment, or the white and red rose of the old English wars. This very word faith, to which the Apostle rightly gives such pre-eminent importance, has been often so treated as to be an instance of superstition. The word itself is Divine and sacred; the habit which it describes is the blessed result of the Divine grace received in the obedient heart. But sometimes people turn faith itself into a work of man; they treat it as something which they are to do, and which shows a kind of merit in the doing. The word then ceases to describe the habit and the attitude of humble trust, whereby Christ will dwell in our hearts, through the willing welcome of our own submission; and it denotes a supposed meritorious form of human exertion, so that faith itself becomes an idol, and its worship is a form of superstition.

¶ People, in their struggle with lies and superstitions, frequently find consolation in the number of superstitions which they have destroyed. That is not correct. It is impossible to find consolation until everything is destroyed which contradicts reason and demands faith. Superstition is like cancer—everything must be cleaned out, if an operation is to be undertaken. Leave a small particle, and everything will grow out again.[1]

¶ It were better to have no opinion of *God* at all; than such an opinion, as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely: and certainly *superstition* is the reproach of the *Deity*. . . . Atheism leaves a man to sense; to philosophy; to natural piety; to laws; to reputation—all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though *religion* were not; but *superstí-*

[1] Tolstoy, *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays*, 525.

tion dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy, in the minds of men. *Superstition*, without a veil, is a deformed thing; for, as it addeth deformity to an ape, to be so like a man; so the similitude of *superstition* to *religion*, makes it the more deformed. And as wholesome meat corrupteth to little worms; so good forms and orders, corrupt into a number of petty observances. There is a *superstition*, in avoiding *superstition*; when men think to do best, if they go furthest from the *superstition* formerly received. Therefore care would be had, that (as it fareth in ill purgings), the good be not taken away, with the bad; which commonly is done, when the people is the reformer.[1]

(2) *Sensuality.*—Perhaps we boast of our freedom from the coarser vices. It is a most blessed thing if we can do so. Let us thank God heartily, if we can, for His most precious gift of a pure heart and unstained conscience. But the world is very near us, and its temptations are abundant; and we shall never be quite safe till our bodies have passed through the grave, and we have been raised again to put on the pure likeness of Christ. And there are too many who will scarcely venture to boast of their freedom from compliance with sensual temptations. If there is nothing worse, men will too often read books of doubtful morality, or perhaps of very undoubted immorality. They will gaze with interest on spectacles of very doubtful purity. They will indulge in pursuits which will bring them very close into the neighbourhood of open sin. In such cases it is very hard indeed to assure ourselves that Christ is dwelling in our hearts by faith.

¶ Samson, who fell a victim to his own licentiousness, is a type of the sensualist. Physically strong, but morally weak, woefully deficient in self-restraint, he stands for ever as a warning beacon to young men. Our sensual nature we share with the brutes. Our measure as a man is the height of our moral and spiritual nature. There is something unspeakably pathetic in the record of the strong man going out, as he was wont, to shake himself, and knowing not that his strength had departed.[2]

(3) *Self-indulgence.*—Those who think too much of their mere comfort are exposed to the subtle temptation of forgetting the law of duty, the law of self-sacrifice, obedience to which is the proof and token that Christ is dwelling in our hearts by faith.

[1] Bacon, *Essays*, "Of Superstition."

[2] David Watson, *The Heritage of Youth*, 90.

Now, of all the idols men can worship, there is scarcely a meaner than the idol of mere ease and comfort; there is scarcely a tendency that is more destructive of lofty aims and worthy efforts; there is scarcely one that is more unlike the Gospel image of our Saviour, who had not where to lay His head, or more at variance with the spirit that would pray, with the Apostle, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

Oh I could go through all life's troubles singing,
Turning earth's night to day,
If self were not so fast around me, clinging
To all I do or say.

My very thoughts are selfish, always building
Mean castles in the air;
I use my love of others for a gilding
To make myself look fair.

I fancy all the world engrossed with judging
My merit or my blame;
Its warmest praise seems an ungracious grudging
Of praise which I might claim.

In youth, or age, by city, wood, or mountain,
Self is forgotten never;
Where'er we tread, it gushes like a fountain,
And its waters flow for ever.

Alas! no speed in life can snatch us wholly
Out of self's hateful sight;
And it keeps step, whene'er we travel slowly,
And sleeps with us at night.

O miserable omnipresence, stretching
Over all time and space,
How have I run from thee, yet found thee reaching
The goal in every race.

The opiate balms of grace may haply still thee,
Deep in my nature lying;
For I may hardly hope, alas! to kill thee,
Save by the act of dying.

O Lord! that I could waste my life for others,
With no ends of my own,
That I could pour myself into my brothers,
And live for them alone!

Such was the life Thou livedst; self abjuring,
Thine own pains never easing,
Our burdens bearing, our just doom enduring,
A life without self-pleasing![1]

I.

The Indwelling.

1. During the days of His ministry on earth our Lord promised, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). Again, it is said in Rev. iii. 20, in that affecting invitation given by the "Amen, the faithful and true witness"—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This is the invitation and this the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we find Him fulfilling this engagement in various portions of His history. When He came to the city of Jericho for the conversion of Zacchæus, we find Him saying, "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke xix. 5). We are informed also that, in the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus, they constrained the Lord to come into their house, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent": and He was prevailed on by their entreating fervency, and "he went in to tarry with them." Now, it is a fact, that when the soul comes to the true knowledge of God, through the teaching of His Holy Spirit, and is enabled to lay hold on the Divine promises, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, the Saviour enters into this soul and dwells there.

Go not, my soul, in search of Him,
Thou wilt not find Him there,—
Or in the depths of shadow dim,
Or heights of upper air.

[1] F. W. Faber.

For not in far-off realms of space
The Spirit hath its throne;
In every heart it findeth place
And waiteth to be known.

Thought answereth alone to thought,
And Soul with soul hath kin;
The outward God he findeth not,
Who finds not God within.

And if the vision come to thee
Revealed by inward sign,
Earth will be full of Deity
And with His glory shine!

Thou shalt not want for company,
Nor pitch thy tent alone;
The indwelling God will go with thee,
And show thee of His own.

O gift of gifts, O grace of grace
That God should condescend
To make thy heart His dwelling-place,
And be thy daily Friend!

Then go not thou in search of Him,
But to thyself repair;
Wait thou within the silence dim,
And thou shalt find Him there.[1]

2. The dwelling of Christ in the heart is to be regarded as being a plain literal fact. To a man who does not believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, that is, of course, nonsense; but to those who see in Him the manifested incarnate God, there ought to be no difficulty in accepting this as the simple literal force of the words before us, that in every soul where faith, however feeble, has been exercised, there Jesus Christ does verily abide. It is not to be weakened down into any notion of participation in His likeness, sympathy with His character, submission to His influence, following His example, listening to His instruction, or the like. A dead Plato may so influence his followers, but that

[1] F. L. Hosmer.

is not how a living Christ influences His disciples. What is meant is no mere influence derived but separable from Him, however blessed and gracious that influence might be; it is the presence of His own self, exercising influences which are inseparable from His presence, and to be realized only when He dwells in us.

¶ We are called "mystics" when we preach Christ in the heart. Ah! brother, unless your Christianity be in the good deep sense of the word "mystical," it is mechanical, which is worse. I preach, and rejoice that I have to preach, a "Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Nor do I stop there; I preach a Christ that is in us, dwelling in our hearts if we be His at all.[1]

3. When Paul prayed that Christ might "*dwell*" in the hearts of the Christians at Ephesus he was thinking of something far greater than that kind of union with Christ which is the condition of even the lowest forms of spiritual life. The whole emphasis of the clause is thrown on the word "dwell." There is an abiding presence of Christ in the heart which is a perpetual manifestation of the infinite love of God, and brings with it the very righteousness and blessedness of heaven, a presence which fills the whole life with a glory unbroken by clouds, and which does not change with rising and setting suns, but is like the glory of the city of God of which it is said that "there is no night there." This presence is possible only where there is a great faith, and for a great faith there must be a great strength, a strength which is given to the inward man through the power of the Divine Spirit.

¶ St. Paul asks that "the Christ may take up his abode,—may settle in your hearts." The word signifies to set up one's house or make one's home in a place, by way of contrast with a temporary and uncertain sojourn (comp. ii. 19). The same verb in Colossians ii. 9 asserts that in Christ "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead"; and in Colossians i. 19 it declares, used in the same tense as here, that it was God's "pleasure that all the fulness should make its dwelling in him" now raised from the dead, who had emptied and humbled Himself to fulfil the purpose of the Father's love. So it is desired that Christ should take His seat

[1] A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, 17.

within us. He is never again to stand at the door and knock, nor to have a doubtful and disputed footing in the house. Let the Master come in, and claim His own. Let Him become the heart's fixed tenant and full occupier.[1]

¶ We all know how having certain persons with us changes the spirit-atmosphere by which we are surrounded and affected. Certain things you might do when alone you would not think of doing in the presence of these friends. Your speech is restrained by the presence of some; it is made to flow more freely by the presence of others.

The presence of Christ may become in a very real and practical sense the atmosphere of the life. He is with us. He is unseen by these outer eyes. That is true. But He is far more real than these outer things which I can touch and see and smell. The sense of His presence can be cultivated. It should not be thought of as a day-dreamy, visionary sort of thing, a using of certain religious phraseology constantly. It may be a real, practical, sane, sensible living as in His presence, in such a way as to give a wholesome sweetness and sanity to all of one's life.

That wondrous presence of His so recognized, and in growing degree realized, will change all the life subtly but tremendously. He will become a Host in the home, reshaping its usage and life, until by and by it will be permeated by His spirit, and take on the shape of His personality. He will affect one's social intercourse, the conversation, and the prevailing spirit and motive under the conversation. He will shape one's business transactions, shutting some things wholly out, bringing other considerations in to guide and decide, and making a new standard by which all will be measured and controlled.

He will control the whole life. There will be sacrifice of a real cutting sort. It need not be sought for. It comes of itself in the path of obedience. It is sin that makes sacrifice. Sin put a cross in the Saviour's path, and will see to it that a cross is as surely put in the path of every follower of the Saviour.

And there is yet more, so much more that all this seems scarcely like a beginning. He reveals Himself. There is a peace, a gladness, a joy that must sing; there is a fragrance in the spirit air, the fragrance of His presence. There is fighting, sometimes thick and hard, with moist brow, clenched hand and tight breathing. But there is victory. It is victory *through* fighting. It is all the sweeter for that.[2]

[1] G. G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 189.
[2] S. D. Gordon, *The Crowded Inn*, 59.

II.

In the Heart.

1. "The heart," in the language of the Bible, never denotes the emotional nature by itself. The antithesis of "heart and head," the divorce of feeling and understanding in our modern speech, is foreign to Scripture. The heart is our interior, conscious self, thought, feeling, will, in their personal unity. It needs the whole Christ to fill and rule the whole heart, a Christ who is the Lord of the intellect, the Light of the reason, no less than the Master of the feelings and desires.

¶ That He may dwell *in your hearts*, that best room of the house of manhood; not in your thoughts alone, but in your affections; not merely have Him in your minds, but have Him in your loves. Paul wants you to have a love to Christ of a most abiding character, not a love that flames up under an earnest sermon, and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flame, the abiding love of Jesus in your hearts, both day and night, like the flame upon the altar which never went out.[1]

¶ I was reading lately Montalembert's *Memoir of Lacordaire*, and could not but feel that there was, and I hope is, high principle among some of the Roman Catholics of France. Here are one or two sayings of Lacordaire:—

"I will never believe that the heart can wear out, and I feel every day that it becomes stronger, more tender, more detached from the ties of the body, in proportion as life and reflection neutralize the covering in which it is stifled."

"I am sad betimes; but who is there that is not so? It is a dart which we must always carry in the soul; we must try not to lean on the side where it is. It is the javelin of Mantinea in the breast of Epaminondas; it is extracted only by death and entrance into eternity."

"I desire, like Mary Magdalene, the day but one before the Passion, to break at the feet of Jesus Christ this frail vessel of my thought."

Among his last words were, "I am unable to pray to Him, but I look upon Him"; his very last, "My God! open to me, open to me!"[2]

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

[2] *Letters of John Ker*, 147.

2. The indwelling of Christ in us is not like that of a man who, abiding in a house, is nevertheless in no sense identified with it. No; His indwelling is a possession of our hearts that is truly Divine, quickening and penetrating their inmost being with His life. The Father strengthens us inwardly with might by His Spirit, so that the Spirit animates our will and brings it, like the will of Jesus, into entire sympathy with His own. The result is that our heart then, like the heart of Jesus, bows before Him in humility and surrender; our life seeks only His honour; and our whole soul thrills with desire and love for Jesus. This inward renewal makes the heart fit to be a dwelling-place of the Lord. By the Spirit He is revealed within us and we come to know that He is actually in us as our life, in a deep, Divine unity, One with us.

¶ Be good at the depths of you, and you will discover that those who surround you will be good even to the same depths. Nothing responds more infallibly to the secret cry of goodness than the secret cry of goodness that is near. While you are actively good in the invisible, all those who approach you will unconsciously do things that they could not do by the side of any other man. Therein lies a force that has no name; a spiritual rivalry that knows no resistance. It is as though this were the actual place where is the sensitive spot of our soul; for there are souls that seem to have forgotten their existence and to have renounced everything that enables the being to rise; but, once touched here, they all draw themselves erect; and in the Divine plains of the secret goodness, the most humble of souls cannot endure defeat.[1]

¶ But if we remain wholly in ourselves, separated from God, we shall be miserable and unsaved; and so we ought to feel ourselves living wholly in God and wholly in ourselves, and between these two sensations we shall find nothing but the grace of God and the exercises of our love. For from the height of our highest sensation, the splendour of God shines upon us, and it teaches us truth and impels us towards all virtues into the eternal love of God. Without interruption we follow this splendour on to the source from which it flows, and there we feel that our spirits are stripped of all things and bathed beyond thought of rising in the pure and infinite ocean of love.[2]

[1] Maeterlinck, *The Treasure of the Humble*, 166.
[2] Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics*, 91.

Speak to me, my God;
And let me know the living Father cares
For me, even me; for this one of His children,—
Hast Thou no word for me? I am Thy thought.
God, let Thy mighty heart beat into mine,
And let mine answer as a pulse to Thine.
See, I am low; yea, very low; but Thou
Art high, and Thou canst lift me up to Thee.
I am a child, a fool before Thee, God;
But Thou hast made my weakness as my strength.
I am an emptiness for Thee to fill;
My soul, a cavern for Thy sea.

III.

Through Faith.

1. All Bible students are aware of the prominence given to faith in Holy Scripture. Indeed, it is frequently alleged that this prominence is unwholesome and mischievous, that it attaches a false and exaggerated importance to belief, since "what really matters is not a man's creed, but his character and conduct." And students are familiar with the simple and effective answer to this objection, viz., that creed forms conduct, and so builds up character, and that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." But whether men approve of it or not, this is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Gospel of Christ, that it proclaims "salvation by grace, through faith"; not by merit, through character. So we read that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The seed is snatched away from the hearts of the wayside hearers, "lest they should believe, and be saved." The whole Gospel can be summed up in the one sentence, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

2. And this is equally true of all the later stages of the Christian life. All growth and progress, all perfection of character, all victory and fruitfulness, are by faith. The promise of the Spirit is received by faith. Christ dwells "in our hearts by faith."

[1] George MacDonald, "Within and Without" (*Poetical Works*, i. 10).

Christ is not an object of sight or sense to us. We know Him only by believing in Him. From first to last, faith is the instrument and medium of all our union and fellowship with Him. Faith alone brings Him into the soul; and faith alone keeps Him there. By faith alone we find His presence, and by faith alone we continue to realize it. By faith we make Him ours, by faith love Him, and by faith live unto Him. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We have no eye but that of faith whereby to see, no ear but that of faith whereby to hear, no hand but that of faith whereby to apprehend, and no heart but that of faith whereby to embrace Christ. Thus faith lies at the very foundation of all personal religion, and must be the pervading element of all. We are true Christians in so far as we have true faith. We walk to heaven by faith, and live in God by faith.

3. But what is faith? It is a certain state and condition of the whole inward man, a certain aspect of the whole mind, and heart, and soul towards God in Christ. Christ Himself, and not merely a particular set of facts, or events, or propositions, is the object of it. We believe in *Him*, we trust *Him*, we apprehend His presence, we have confidence in His word of promise, we rely on His love, His goodness, His power, we cleave in spirit to *Him*, we rejoice in *Him*, and commune with *Him*. This is faith, and by this Christ dwells in our heart. It is peculiar to Christians who are such not in name only, but in deed and in truth; it is peculiar to those who are partakers of the Spirit, who have the life of religion within them. As soon as ever a soul has this faith, Christ is in him. As long as ever he has it, Christ dwells in him.

¶ Is it paradoxical, this mighty power of faith? Not more so than the mighty power of lips and throat when the strong meat, or reviving cordial, is taken into the exhausted body. The "mighty power" is not really in lips and throat, but in what they, and only they, can receive and do receive. The "mighty power" is not properly in the faith, but in Him whom it lets into the weary being, that He may do there a work which He, not faith, does; Himself making our weakness strength and our pollution purity.[1]

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *The Pledges of His Love*, 70.

¶ My enemies (at Tanna) seldom slackened their hateful designs against my life, however calmed or baffled for the moment. Life in such circumstances led me to cling very near to the Lord Jesus; I knew not, for one brief hour, when or how attack might be made; and yet, with my trembling hand clasped in the hand once nailed on Calvary, and now swaying the sceptre of the Universe, calmness and peace and resignation abode in my soul. Next day, a wild chief followed me about for four hours with his loaded musket, and, though often directed towards me, God restrained his hand. I spoke kindly to him, and attended to my work as if he had not been there, fully persuaded that my God had placed me there, and would protect me till my allotted task was finished. Looking up in unceasing prayer to our dear Lord Jesus, I left all in His hands, and felt immortal till my work was done. Trials and hairbreadth escapes strengthened my faith, and seemed only to nerve me for more to follow; and they did tread swiftly upon each other's heels. Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Saviour, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. His words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," became to me so real that it would not have startled me to behold Him, as Stephen did, gazing down upon the scene. I felt His supporting power, as did St. Paul, when he cried, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is the sober truth, and it comes back to me sweetly after twenty years, that I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smile of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket, club, or spear was being levelled at my life. Oh the bliss of living and enduring, as seeing Him who is invisible![1]

(1) *Faith is trust.*—And trust which is faith is self-distrust. "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Rivers do not run on the mountain tops, but down in the valleys. So the heart that is lifted up and self-complacent has no dew of His blessing resting upon it, but has the curse of Gilboa adhering to its barrenness; but the low lands, the humble and the lowly hearts, are they in which the waters that go softly, scoop their course, and diffuse their blessings. Faith is self-distrust. Self-distrust brings the Christ.

¶ My own idea of trust is as illimitable as the word indicates. Whatever happens, to believe it is a part of the Divine plan.

[1] *John G. Paton*, i. 191.

However unpleasant, however painful, however disagreeable may be that happening or circumstance, to determine upon finding its good meaning, and to turn it to the soul's account and make it a means of character building. Trust does not, in my interpretation of the word, include placid acceptance of conditions or events. It means using these things as stepping-stones to deliverance. When our environment is not to our liking, when we are annoyed and hurt by events, the first thing to do is to discover if we ourselves have not been the cause of these troubles. If we realize on careful analysis that we are the cause, then trust the Divine forces to show us the way out. If we find we are blameless, and the troubles come through what we call Fate, then again trust in Divine power, within ourselves and beyond ourselves, to deliver us. Meanwhile let us go upon our way doing the duty which lies nearest, with absolute trust in the heart that we are treading the path to power.[1]

(2) *Faith is desire.*—Never in the history of the world has it been or can it be that a longing towards Him shall be a longing thrown back unsatisfied upon itself. We have but to trust, and we possess. We open the door for the entrance of Christ by the simple act of faith, and, blessed be His name! He can squeeze Himself through a very little chink, and He does not require that the gates should be flung wide open in order that, with some of His blessings, He may come in.

¶ It seems to me we can never give up longing and wishing while we are thoroughly alive. There are certain things we feel to be beautiful and good, and we *must* hunger after them. How can we ever be satisfied without them until our feelings are deadened?[2]

¶ The soul possesses a native yearning for intercourse and companionship, which takes it to God as naturally as the home instinct of the pigeon takes it to the place of its birth. There is in every normal soul a spontaneous outreach, a free play of spirit which gives it onward yearning of unstilled desire. It is no mere subjective instinct. If it met no response it would soon be weeded out of the race. It would shrivel like the functionless organ. We could not long continue to pray in faith, if we lost the assurance that there is a Person who cares, and who actually corresponds with us. In fact, the very desire to pray is in itself prophetic of a Heavenly Friend—a Divine Companion.[3]

[1] Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *New Thought Common Sense*, 233.
[2] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.
[3] Rufus Jones.

With Thee a moment! Then what dreams have play!
Traditions of eternal toil arise,
Search for the high, austere, and lonely way
The Spirit moves in through Eternities.
Ah, in the soul what memories arise!

And with what yearning inexpressible,
Rising from long forgetfulness, I turn
To Thee invisible, unrumoured, still:
White for Thy whiteness all desires burn.
Ah, with what longing once again I turn.[1]

4. What do we gain by the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith?

(1) *Constancy.*—We are ready to say again and again: "Oh, that I were *always* what I am *sometimes*!" Is not one of the greatest needs of our spiritual life constancy—strength to enable us to continue?—"Patient continuance in well doing." There is no such token of strength or proof of power as being able to continue. That quality is lacking in us to-day. How is the defect to be met? Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"; and if He dwell in us He will impart to us that element of stability, He will make us strong by His indwelling presence that never fails.

¶ When Mr. Browning wrote to Miss Haworth, in 1861, he had said: "I shall still grow, I hope; but my root is taken, and remains." He was then alluding to a special offshoot of feeling and association, on the permanence of which it is not now necessary to dwell; but it is certain that he continued growing up to a late age, and that the development was limited only by those general roots, those fixed conditions of his being, which had predetermined its form. This progressive intellectual vitality is amply represented in his works; it also reveals itself in his letters in so far as they remain and are accessible. I only refer to it to give emphasis to a contrasted or corresponding characteristic: his aversion to every thought of change. I have spoken of his constancy to all degrees of friendship and love. What he loved once he loved always, from the dearest man or woman to whom his allegiance had been given to the humblest piece of furniture which had served him.[2]

[1] "A. E."

[2] Mrs. Sutherland Orr, *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, 349.

¶ It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel.

But it is only by deliberate effort that I recall the long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise—toil on both sides equal—by which, year after year, my mother forced me to learn these fine old Scottish Paraphrases, and chapters (the eighth of 1st Kings being one—try it, good reader, in a leisure hour!), allowing not so much as a syllable to be missed or misplaced; while every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three weeks, concerning the accent of the "of" in the lines

> Shall any following spring revive
> The ashes of the urn?—

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents), on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three weeks' labour, that my mother got the accent lightened on the "of" and laid on the ashes, to her mind. But had it taken three years, she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And, assuredly, had she not done it,—well, there's no knowing what would have happened; but I'm very thankful she *did*.[1]

(2) *Cleansing*.—The thoughts of the heart are a trouble to every Christian; the secret springs of action—they are the trouble. The secret tastes and the sympathies—these are the things that go to make the essence of Christian life.

> Rivers to the ocean run,
> Nor stay in all their course;
> Fire, ascending, seeks the sun;
> Both speed them to their source;
> So a soul, new-born of God,
> Pants to know His glorious face,
> Upwards tends to His abode,
> To rest in His embrace.

[1] Ruskin, *Praeterita*, i. 54.

(3) *Catholicity.*—What do we read in the Apostle's prayer? That we "may be able to comprehend with all saints." If Christ is in the heart, barriers and divisions melt away. We are one with our brothers. The "hand" is not going to fight with the "foot." We all belong to the same body and we know it; we each have a secret vital link with every other member of the mystical body of Christ. Whatever differences there are on minor points we say: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

¶ What profound and broad contrasts divide men from men; what gulfs separate one race from another, earlier from later ages, any one state of thought and social progress from what went before it and what follows it: and within narrower limits, what endless variety, baffling all imagination to follow, of circumstance and fortune, of capacity and character, of wealth or poverty, of strength or weakness, of inclinations and employments, of a kindly or unkindly lot. Yet for all, *one* life is the guiding light, and the words which express it speak to all. A life the highest conceivable, on almost the lowest conceivable stage, and recorded in the simplest form, with indifference to all outward accompaniments, attractive whether to the few or to the many, is set before us as the final and unalterable ideal of human nature. Amid all its continual and astonishing changes, differing widely as men do, Christ calls them all alike to follow Him: unspeakably great as His example is, it is for the many and the average as much as for the few; homely as is its expression, there is no other lesson for the deepest and most refined. The least were called to its high goodness: the greatest had nothing offered them but its brief-spoken plainness.[1]

That mystic word of Thine, O sovereign Lord,
Is all too pure, too high, too deep for me;
Weary of striving, and with longing faint,
I breathe it back again in *prayer* to Thee.

Abide in me, I pray, and I in Thee;
From this good hour, O, leave me never more;
Then shall the discord cease, the wound be healed,
The lifelong bleeding of the soul be o'er.

Abide in me; o'ershadow by Thy love
Each half-formed purpose and dark thought of sin;
Quench, ere it rise, each selfish, low desire,
And keep my soul as Thine, calm and divine.

[1] Dean Church.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.

Abide in me; there have been moments blest
When I have heard Thy voice and felt Thy power,
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion hushed,
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

These were but seasons, beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;
Fulfil at once Thy precept and my prayer—
Come, and abide in me, and I in Thee![1]

[1] H. B. Stowe.

The Love of Christ.

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THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

I bow my knees unto the Father . . . to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.—Eph. iii. 17-19.

1. THESE words, and the remarkable passage to which they belong, supply us with the keynote of the Apostle Paul's life and letters and ministry. They show us how intensely he was permeated with and dominated by the love of Christ. It was not an idea that possessed him; neither was it a system. It was a Person, and that Person was Christ. It was not the life of Christ or the character of Christ that fascinated him; it was Christ Himself Jesus Christ was the charm of his whole life: "To me to live is Christ." St. Paul's life was interpenetrated with Christ, so much so that he lost himself in Him: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

¶ I hardly know anything more disheartening than to read such a passage as this, and to feel while we read it how little our own hearts and thoughts answer to it. We see how St. Paul felt and thought. The words come glowing from his soul; he is lifted up above himself with the greatness, the inconceivable greatness, of the things he is talking of. His inward eye is fixed on the love of Christ to the world—on the wonderfulness of God's counsels to men—on the height and depth, and length and breadth, which no one can measure, of what had just been made known of God's feelings about them, and of His purposes towards them. And from the fullness of his heart his mouth speaks. We see that he is overflowing with the feelings produced by the contemplation of what Christ is and has done. His whole mind is alive to it. He speaks not by custom, or because it is right to magnify the Lord's greatness, but because he cannot help it—he cannot restrain what he feels and thinks.

And how differently do we read the words! There they are

before us—words of fire and life, words which show that to him who spoke them the love of Christ was the most real, the nearest, the most absorbing thought in the world. Christ is not less to us than he was to St. Paul. But how often must we confess to ourselves that we have no feelings which answer to the Apostle's manner of speaking; we cannot repeat them as the natural and unforced expression of our own feelings. There seems such a gulf between what we ought to feel and what we do feel, such a difference between the way in which the Gospel appeared to St. Paul and the way in which it appears to us. He found no difficulty in speaking worthily of his Master's love; he passed from the outer scenes of ordinary life to the contemplation of Christ, and straightway his heart began to kindle and his tongue to speak. But we seem only able to touch, as it were, the outside shell of his words. We see, but do not feel, how excellent they are. They are such a contrast to the common thoughts of our life, they are so far above us, that we cannot enter into them.[1]

2. This constitutes the third of the petitions in this great prayer of St. Paul's, each of which rises above, and is a consequence of, the preceding, and leads on to, and is a cause or occasion of, the subsequent one.

There are two thoughts in the petition: he prays that the Ephesians may be able to apprehend the love of Christ in its vast dimensions, and that they may have an experimental knowledge of it, though it passes knowledge. But the exposition of each clause by itself will be the best exposition of the whole text.

I.

Rooted and Grounded in Love.

These two distinct conceptions "rooted" and "grounded" are frequently united in the Scriptures (as in Ps. cxliv. 12, and 1 Cor. iii. 9). Two cognate conceptions—one borrowed from the processes of nature, and the other from human art—are employed to indicate at once the life, the growth, the strength, and the stability of a Christian's hope. A tree and a tower are the material objects which are used here as alphabetic letters to express a spiritual thought. More particularly, as a tree depends for life and growth

[1] R. W. Church, *Village Sermons*, ii. 287.

upon its roots being embedded in a genial soil. and a tower depends for strength and stability upon its foundation, the Apostle desires, by means of these conceptions, to express and illustrate the corresponding features of the Christian life. If disciples are compared to living trees, love is the soil they grow in; if they are compared to a building, love is the foundation on which it stands secure.

¶ The root is taken from the field of nature, the grounding or founding from the world of art. The root is laid in the soil to imbibe its virtues, the foundation is placed on its base to sustain the edifice. The root grows, and produces fruit, the foundation stands, and gives strength. The root needs continual supply, the foundation rests in its completeness, and abides always.[1]

1. *Rooted.*—We cast our affections down into the character and the Being of God; we wind them about His attributes; we strike them into His promises; we drive them deep into His faithfulness. There the roots of our affection lie. They take up, they drink in, the nature of the love they live in; they are always assimilating themselves to it, and they send up its sweet savour by little, silent threads, which are always running to the fountain of life. Our words, our actions, our whole outer being, cannot choose but mould itself to them, and take that love. Because of those secret processes of the roots which are in Christ, we love. We love simply because we are rooted in love.

¶ Most men, when they wish to be religious, begin by trying to give up certain things, and to do certain other actions. But there must be something that goes before that, else it is just as if you planted leaves without stems, or flowers without roots. The springs of life must be in their right places. The roots must be really in God. True religion does not consist so much in this thing, or that thing, as being always in a certain tone and atmosphere. The plant takes its character from the ground; the soul, from its inmost, deepest associations. There must be that behind whereby we are always making inspirations of love.[2]

¶ In descending by one of the passes of the Alps into the lovely valley of the Saarnen, the traveller may notice on the right hand of the path a pine tree, growing in extraordinary circumstances. Enormous masses of hoary rock lie scattered in the bottom of the ravine. They have fallen from the crags which

[1] J. Vaughan. [2] *Ibid.*

form its stupendous walls, and it is on the top of one of these, a bare, naked block, that the pine tree stands. No dwarf, misshapen thing, like the birch or mountain ash on an old castle wall, where the wind or passing bird had dropped the seed; it is a forest giant, with rugged trunk, and top that shoots a green pyramid to the skies. At first sight one wonders how a tree seated on the summit of a huge stone, raised above the soil, with no apparent means of living, could live at all, still more grow with such vigour as to defy the storms that sweep the pass, and the severe and long winters that reign over these solitudes. A nearer approach explains the mystery. Finding soil enough on the summit, where lichens had grown and decayed, to sustain its early age, it had thrown out roots which, while the top stretched itself to the light, lowered themselves down to the naked stone, feeling for earth and food. Touching the ground at length, they buried themselves in it to draw nourishment from its unseen but inexhaustible supplies, to feed the sapling into a giant tree.[1]

2. *Grounded.*—More than once in this Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul uses the imagery of the foundations of a building to describe the foundations of a Christian life. Perhaps the reason was this. To any one entering Ephesus, the first object that would strike his eyes would be the splendid temple of Diana. There it stood, with its one hundred and seven pillars, each sixty feet high. All Asia had contributed to the building of it. Though its foundations were laid on marshy ground, years and years of patient labour had overcome all the natural difficulties of the place. So St. Paul, coming to Ephesus to supplant this false form of worship, felt that the Christian's life must rest on a foundation as hidden, but as firm, as that of this heathen temple. That foundation-stone, he says, must be love.

¶ The grand foundation or ground of everything is love, God's love. Because "God is love," therefore His love goes forth to sinners. Because His love went forth to sinners, He provided a way by which He could restore sinners again to happiness and to Himself; and so Jesus died for them. And since Jesus died for sinners, therefore God chose us, drew us, pardoned us, spoke peace to us. And having loved us enough to do this, what will not the same love do, what prayer will He not hear, what good thing can He withhold, what undertaking will He not make for us, for time and for eternity? That is a foundation. It will

[1] Thomas Guthrie.

support anything—any comfort, any work, any hope we ever choose to build upon it. It is like some mathematical proposition, which cannot be assailed, and the whole problem is actually contained within it, and only wants to be worked out. It stands to the soul like solid adamant to the whole temple—a foundation.[1]

3. *In love.*—The soil in which the living tree is planted is *love.* What is the love in which the trees of righteousness are rooted? Whether is it God's love to man, or man's love to God and to his brother? The question admits of an answer at once easily intelligible and demonstrably true. The love in which the roots of faith strike down for nourishment is not human but Divine. It is not even that grace which is sovereign and Divine in its origin but residing and acting in a renewed human heart; it is the attribute, and even the nature, of Deity, for "God is love." The soil which bears and nourishes the new life of man is the love of God in the gift of His Son.

It introduces an inextricable confusion of ideas to think of believers as trees rooted in their own love—an emotion that has its abode and its exercise within their own hearts. The roots of a man's faith and hope must penetrate, not inward into the love he exercises, but outward into the love which is exercised towards him. The roots of a tree grow, not into the tree itself, but into an independent soil, which at once supports its weight and nourishes its life. In like manner a Christian's faith does not lean and live upon anything within himself; it goes out and draws all its support from God's love to sinners in the Gospel of His Son.

¶ According to the Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." A very comprehensive and noble definition, no doubt! Yet did it never strike you as strange that there is no mention of love here? This appears a very remarkable omission—an omission as remarkable as if an orator who undertook to describe the firmament left out the sun; or an artist, in painting the human face, made it sightless, and gave no place on the canvas to those beaming eyes which impart to the countenance its life and expression. Why did an Assembly, for piety, learning, and talents, the greatest, perhaps, that ever met in England, or anywhere else, in that catalogue of the Divine attributes assign no place to love? Unless we are to

[1] J. Vaughan.

understand the term "goodness" as comprehending love, the omission may be thus explained and illustrated: Take a globe and, observing their natural order, lay upon its surface the different hues of the rainbow; give it a rapid motion round its axis; and now the blue, red, yellow, and other colours vanish. As if by magic, the whirling sphere instantly changes into purest white, presenting to our eyes a visible, and to our understanding a palpable, proof that the sunbeam is not a simple but a compound body: thread spun of various rays, which, when blended into one, form what we call light. And may it not be that these divines make no distinct mention of love, just because they held that as all the separate colours blended together form light, so all the attributes acting together make love; and that thus, because God is just, wise, powerful, holy, good, and true, of necessity, therefore, and in the express words of John, "God is love"?[1]

¶ All vigorous life is a correspondence between organism and environment. If a tree is to be "rooted and grounded," it must find, deep hidden in the soil, the materials it requires for its own substance. Otherwise, poverty in the soil will be reflected in its stunted branches, yellow leaves, and imperfect roots. Just so, if we are to be "rooted and grounded in love," love must be the deepest ingredient in the soil in which our spiritual nature grows. The fact that men and women have become thus "rooted and grounded" that, by the exercise of faith, their characters have been "made perfect in love," is thus the evidence of something more; it implies the presence of love in their spiritual environment.[2]

¶ It was manifest from her childhood, as almost invariably with those heroes and heroines of history who have been the lovers and leaders of mankind, that Florence Nightingale had special gifts and sympathies, and that she was inspired by a sacred ambition to use them for the alleviation of pain and sorrow. I remember a row of young palm-trees in Dr. Bennett's garden at Mentone, and one of them was thrice the height of the rest. There was a tank of water five yards below, but the tree had reached it with its roots. So Florence, rooted and grounded in love, rose above her fellows.[3]

II.

Strong to Apprehend.

1. It requires strength, says Paul, to lay hold of the love of God. Some of us might, perhaps, fancy that it would have been more

[1] Thomas Guthrie. [2] E. Grubb, *The Personality of God*, 124.
[3] Dean Hole, *Then and Now*, 93.

appropriate had he said, "*weak* enough to lay hold." For faith, we have come to imagine, is a characteristic of weak rather than of strong souls—a quality by which we forgo the strength of our reason, and passively accept that which mere authority lays upon us. But we shall look in vain for any sanction in St. Paul's thoughts for the opposition we fancy to exist between faith and reason. Their operation he never brings into contrast. What he does contrast is faith and sight. The spiritual realities, he tells us, are those that "eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9). The exercise of faith is for him of similar quality to the vigorous use of the mind, when we are striving with all our force to master some difficult problem that confronts us. He recognizes that the love of God is hidden and elusive, that it can be "laid hold of" only by strenuous effort.

2. The word translated "ye may be strong" is found scarcely anywhere else; Paul found it hard to discover a word to express his meaning; it implies the putting forth of our best powers to do something that is extremely difficult, or almost impossible,—and doing it successfully. But, while Paul is as far as possible from suggesting that the love of God can be "laid hold of" by weak and passive acceptance of a dogma, he does, it is clear, maintain that the faith which "lays hold" is not simply identical with the use of our reasoning faculty. What is the condition of its effective exercise? He does not say, "that ye, being furnished with complete knowledge," or "that ye, having your intelligence sharpened to the utmost," may be strong enough to apprehend; but "that ye, *being rooted and grounded in love.*" The condition of the vigorous exercise of faith is, for him, not intellectual mainly, but ethical. He knew, like his Master before him, that it is the pure in heart who see; the eye that is single that is full of light; the doing of the will of God that yields knowledge about the teaching. If we are to know the love that is above us, it will be through the experience of love within us.

3. Thus there are certain conditions to be observed that we may be strong to apprehend the love of Christ in its vastness.

(1) *There must be the reception of Christ into the heart by faith.* —He that is rooted and grounded in love because Christ dwells

in his heart will be strengthened to know the love in which he is rooted. The Christ within us will know the love of Christ. We must first "taste," and then we shall "see" that the Lord is good, as the Psalmist puts it with deep truth. First the appropriation and feeding upon God, then the clear perception by the mind of the sweetness in the taste. First the enjoyment; then the reflection on the enjoyment. First the love; then the consciousness of the love of Christ possessed and the love to Christ experienced. The heart must be grounded in love that the man may know the love which passeth knowledge.

¶ What is the beginning of everything? "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." There is the gate through which you and I may come, and by which we must come, if we are to come at all, into the possession and perception of Christ's great love. Here is the path of knowledge. First of all there must be the simple historical knowledge of the facts of Christ's life and death for us, with the Scripture teaching of their meaning and power. And then we must turn these truths from mere notions into life. It is not enough to know the love that God has to us, in that lower sense of the word "knowledge." Many of you know that, who never got any blessing out of it all your days, and never will unless you change. Besides the "knowing" there must be the "believing" of the love. You must translate the notion into a living fact in your experience. You must pass from the simple work of understanding the Gospel to the higher act of faith. You must not be contented with knowing, you must trust. And if you have done that all the rest will follow, and the little, narrow, low doorway of humble self-distrusting faith, through which a man creeps on his knees, leaving outside all his sin and his burden, opens out into the temple palace: the large place in which Christ's love is imparted to the soul.[1]

(2) *There must be meditation on the love of Christ.*—We have the same knowledge that St. Paul had of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. And yet what a different thing was this love to him and to us. Is it possible for us ever to realize it as he did; ever to have the feelings towards it which in him stirred up the depths of his soul, and burst out as naturally from his lips as water does from a spring? And if it is possible—and who can doubt it?—why is it that St. Paul's strong words seem to us so strange, so hopelessly above us? One reason is that we think so

[1] A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, 32.

little about it. We hear, and read, and talk, but we do not think. When we hear of our Lord's wonderful doings, we do not take the thought away with us and consider it, consider what it means and what it comes to. We never turn it about in our minds as we do the ways and doings of men among whom we live.

¶ Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character,—the Christlike nature in its fullest development. To love abundantly is to live abundantly, and to love for ever is to live for ever.[1]

¶ The joy of heaven is the joy of love. The key to it is in Christ, who for the joy that was set before Him endured all. Christ's was the joy of self-sacrifice, of loving, of saving, of giving up His life to another. But this is no joy save to those who love.[2]

(3) But above everything, if we would understand and feel our Master's love, *we must have something of His Spirit.*—Most truly is it said that love is the key and interpreter of love. It is difficult to sympathize with and to enter into it if we are unlike it in our heart and mind. We may for a while be charmed and overcome by some great display of nobleness and unselfishness; we may for a moment be lifted up by the admiration of it, and the wish to be like it, when we read of a man clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, tending the sick, risking his life in pestilence or shipwreck for his fellow-men. But these feelings will pass away, unless we are in reality, and not only in the moment of excitement, like those we admire. They will pass away and leave us dull, and dry, and cold, to what calls upon our love. The story of Christ's love is too old, and too well known, and too familiar, ever to make an impression on us now, unless we have it in our hearts to wish to have something of His love in us.

¶ If "Christ dwell in your hearts by faith," you will be "rooted and grounded in love," and as a consequence you will be able to comprehend spiritual things. A noble passage from the Philippians should be quoted here: "God is my witness, how greatly I long after you all in the [motherly] affections of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception; that you may distinguish the things which transcend." Love, then, according to the Apostle, is the ground and mother of the perceptive faculty. Without

[1] Henry Drummond. [2] James Hinton.

fire there can be no effulgence or radiance. As is the fire, will be the radiance. The source of mental illumination is the Son of God in the heart. It was surely inspiration which moved Paul to pray that his friends might be rooted and grounded in love *in order that they might be able to comprehend* the mysteries of their faith; but it was also pure philosophy. This I pray, that more and yet more you may abound in the spirit of love; that you may advance unto the full recognition and discernment of Heavenly things. "Love is the key which opens all the secrets of faith."[1]

¶ When the American civil war was going on, a mother received the news that her boy had been wounded in the battle of the Wilderness. She took the first train, and started for her boy; although an order had gone forth from the War Department that no more women should be admitted within the lines. But a mother's love knows nothing about orders; so she managed by tears and entreaties to get through the lines to the Wilderness. At last she found the hospital where her boy was. Then she went to the doctor and she said: "Will you let me go to the ward and nurse my boy?"

The doctor said: "I have just got your boy to sleep: he is in a very critical state; and I am afraid if you wake him up the excitement will be so great that it will carry him off. You had better wait awhile, and remain without until I tell him that you have come, and break the news gradually to him." The mother looked into the doctor's face and said: "Doctor, supposing my boy does not wake up, and I should never see him alive! Let me go and sit down by his side: I won't speak to him." "If you will not speak to him you may do so."

She crept to the cot and looked into the face of her boy. How she had longed to look at him. How her eyes seemed to be feasting as she gazed upon his countenance! When she got near enough she could not keep her hand off; she laid that tender, loving hand upon his brow. The moment the hand touched the forehead of her boy, he, without opening his eyes, cried out: "Mother, you have come!" He knew the touch of that loving hand. There was love and sympathy in it.[2]

III.

With All the Saints.

1. The definition of a saint here implied is that it is one who has apprehended something, rather than one who has attained a

[1] John Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, 117.

[2] D. L. Moody, *The Way to God*, 19.

great reputation for sanctity by asceticism or noble deeds; one whose mental conception, whose capacity for thought, has become so quickened and enlarged as to enable him to realize a great idea, which so possesses him that holiness follows naturally. And St. Paul's prayer for his converts is that they too may in a measure possess this widened apprehension, which will link them to all saints.

2. Of what advantage is it to apprehend the extent of Christ's love *with all the saints*? There are several advantages.

(1) *It encourages sanctity in us.*—For our knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ depends largely on our sanctity. If we are pure we shall know. If we were wholly devoted to Him we should wholly know His love to us, and in the measure in which we are pure and holy we shall know it. This heart of ours is like a reflecting telescope, the least breath upon the mirror of which will cause all the starry sublimities that it should shadow forth to fade and become dim. The slightest moisture in the atmosphere, though it be quite imperceptible where we stand, will be dense enough to shut out the fair, shining, snowy summits that girdle the horizon and to leave nothing visible but the lowliness and commonplaces of the prosaic plain.

¶ Those who desire to walk with Christ must try to wear the white robes of a purity that goes down to the depths of the heart, must seek to bring into captivity every thought to His obedience. How can this be done? We aim at a perfect mark, and always fail to reach it. But God will not allow us to be satisfied with anything lower than perfect holiness, so we continue our efforts in spite of failure. The Word of God is severe in its demands; but, though it is a sharp sword, that cuts down and lays bare the deepest motives hidden in the heart, it is with the "merciless severity of merciful love."[1]

¶ Personal holiness is the first and foremost tribute which we owe to the Holy Spirit, for the Master's use, and we are to offer Him no other service until this be paid. Pharnaces, says the Roman historian, sent to Cæsar the present of a diadem, while he was yet rebelling against his throne. Cæsar returned it with this sententious and admonitory message, "First of all yield obedience, and then make presents." The truth of this message is addressed by the Holy Spirit to every Christian and to every church.[2]

(2) *It brings us the joy of fellowship.*—In two ways does Christ

[1] Dora Farncomb, *The Vision of His Face*, 21. [2] T. W. Jenkyn.

give man his true place. He sets him alone beside God, as a son beside his Father, and shows him the indefeasible worth of his own soul, worth potential if not actual; for do not the angels of God sing for joy over even one sinner that repenteth? But He also sets him in a fellowship. For with cords of love He has been drawing after Him, throughout the long centuries, a great multitude which no man can number; and all who are drawn of Him should have fellowship one with another. As I am bound by the tenderest ties to the God who created me for His service, and the Saviour who redeemed me, so I am bound by bonds as strong as they are invisible to all who have ever loved the Lord and shared the redemption which He wrought. It is not good, it is not possible, for man to be alone. To be alone is to die. We are born for fellowship; and our religion satisfies this deep need of our nature by bringing us into a society, a kingdom, a church. We look into the friendly faces of those who worship with us, and we are strong.

¶ In the highest utterances of each man's faith, or in the best moments of his life, Stanley rejoiced to find the common ground of religious feeling or spiritual aspiration. He delighted to collect instances of such expressions from the most varied quarters. It was a Spanish Roman Catholic who said, "Many are the roads by which God carries His own to heaven." It was the venerable patriarch of German Catholic theology, Dr. Döllinger, who said that theology must "transform her mission from a mission of polemics into a mission of irenics; which, if it be worthy of the name, must become a science, not, as heretofore, for making war, but for making peace, and thus bring about that reconciliation of Churches for which the whole civilized world is longing."

In their loftiest moods of inspiration, the Catholic Thomas à Kempis, the Puritan Milton, the Anglican Keble, rose above their peculiar tenets, and "above the limits that divide denominations, into the higher regions of a common Christianity." It was the Baptist Bunyan who taught the world that there was "a common ground of communion, which no difference of external rites could efface." It was the Moravian Gambold who wrote:

> The man
> That could surround the sum of things, and spy
> The heart of God and secrets of His empire,
> Would speak but love. With love the bright result
> Would change the hue of intermediate things,
> And make one thing of all theology.

It was "the Bloody Advocate, Mackenzie," who, whatever his illiberality of action, rose to true liberality of thought when he said, "I am none of those who acknowledge no temples but in their own heads. To chalk out the bordering lines of the Church militant is beyond the geography of my religion." It was Dr. Chalmers who, in the very heat of the great Disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843, asked the question, "Who cares about any Church, but as an instrument of Christian good?" It was the Scotch Episcopalian, Archbishop Leighton, who declared that "the mode of Church government is unconstrained; but peace and concord, kindness and good-will, are indispensable." It was the founder of Irish Presbyterianism (Edward Bryce) who insisted most on "the life of Christ in the heart, and the light of His Word and Spirit on the mind." It was Zwinglius who loved to dwell on "the meeting in the presence of God of every blessed spirit, every holy character, every faithful soul that has existed from the beginning of the world even to the consummation thereof." It was the "main, fundamental, overpowering principle" of Wesley's life, not to promote particular doctrines, but to "elevate the whole Christian world in the great principles of Christian holiness and morality." It was the solemn proclamation of a message of "unity and comprehension"—"in necessary things unity, in doubtful things liberty, in all things charity"—which Richard Baxter carried to "a stormy and divided age," that gave the great Non-conformist leader his pre-eminence.

This was the spirit in which Stanley delighted to see men rise above the spirit of parties.[1]

(3) *It secures completeness of apprehension.*—St. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that they may apprehend the whole extent of the love of Christ. Individually they might see one or more aspects of that love: what they needed, what he wanted, was to see Christ as *all the saints* saw Him. He wanted to see with this saint the righteousness of Christ, with that saint His mercy. He wanted to see with this other saint the crucified Christ, with that other the glorified Christ. Here was a saint who saw Christ as the reformer of social things—Paul wanted to know that Christ; here was another who saw Him as the King of Glory and the Lord of heaven—Paul wished to see Christ as this. His desire for these Ephesians was that they should not have a partial Christ, but *the whole Christ.* What Paul seems to say is that no individual saint has apprehended the whole Christ. No single individual has been

[1] R. E. Prothero, *The Life of Dean Stanley*, ii. 242.

large enough to apprehend Him: else were that saint greater than Christ. No; to know what Christ is we must seek to apprehend what all the saints have known. This saint has seen this in Him, that saint has seen another aspect. To apprehend Him we must strive to know what all the saints know.

¶ The richest individual life is poor in comparison with the manifold experience of "all the saints." Of the Churches which call themselves catholic, what can compare in catholicity with that which includes all the saints, and places at the disposal of every struggling soul, for its guidance and inspiration, all the wise thoughts with which they have ever been visited, all the heroic endurance, even unto death, with which they have sealed their testimony, all their love, hope, faith, joy, triumph, all their vision of eternal things unseen?[1]

¶ One mighty intellect of Newton may sketch the plan of the solar system; one Laplace may demonstrate its permanent equilibrium; one Herschel map out the nebulæ of the southern sky; one Dalton unfold the laws of atomic combination; one Darwin assign the clue to the partial unfolding of the mystery of successive lives in nature. But no single soul is capable of comprehending the love of Christ, for the vision and experience of each is limited, and in morals we are members one of another. God has gifts which He bestows on the solitary students of Divine truth, and gifts which He bestows on His solitary petitioners in the closet or under the fig-tree. But, in general, the law of understanding the love of Christ is united study, united work, united conference, united prayer.[2]

¶ In considering Christ, His character and work, men in various ways grasp special aspects of it. They are fascinated by Him in various fashions; and when they see Christ, they often see Him in one particular way. We cannot discuss fully these various ways; all we can do is just to notify a few of them; you can add to their number. One man looks at Jesus Christ and what he especially sees is His *tenderness*, the sympathy He extends to sinners; his neighbour looks at Christ and what he especially sees is His *righteousness*; but another looks at Jesus Christ and he sees Him as a *social reformer*; thousands to-day see Christ especially as *the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world*. Christians meet at the Cross; it is the centre of the Church. Christ dying for men that they might be free from the thraldom of sin and be reconciled to God fascinates them. Then there are others who, while seeing the Cross and glorying in it,

[1] J. E. McFadyen, *The Divine Pursuit*, 123. [2] Edward White.

pass beyond Golgotha and Olivet to the throne of God, and see Christ as the reigning Lord of heaven and earth under the Father, who has subjected all things to Him, and they see Him especially as *the King who shall come again to rule the earth.* They say: "You must not look alone upon Calvary. The Christ who hung there has ascended on high and will come again; you must see the coming as well as the dying Christ." The future to them explains the past; and they are wondrously drawn by the vision of the returning Christ. So do men in various ways fix and fasten their attention on various aspects of Jesus Christ, of what He was and is; and to the superficial they may seem to contradict and deny each other. The one may seem to believe in a different Christ from the Christ the other believes in; but, nevertheless, it is one Christ in whom they believe.[1]

IV.

The Breadth and Length and Height and Depth.

1. "The breadth and length and height and depth"—of what? Paul does not say; but the words that follow make it practically certain that what he is thinking of is the Divine personality, the Divine character, the Divine love. His thought seems to run parallel with that in the Fourth Gospel: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3).

2. The Apostle, then, in his prayer not only seeks that the spiritual building may be strong, divinely possessed and firmly grounded; but in his enlarged vision of what the believer may have, he teaches us to pray for an all-comprehending and experimental knowledge of the love of Christ, that ye "may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." The temple is made strong by the almighty power of the Spirit; Christ dwells in it; the foundation is settled and sure, and now he proceeds to its geometrical proportions of breadth and length, height and depth.

3. It has been said that Paul's thought was something like this. From that old captivity of his in Rome, his mind went

[1] J. A. Davies, *Seven Words of Love*, 141.

away, carried him to the Ægean Sea, whose blue waters lay in beauty about the yellow sands of the Ephesian shore; and, looking in thought upon the land, he seemed to see a mighty castle, a splendid fortress. It stood out above the landscape as if with conscious pride, as if it knew it was the master of the coast and country. There it was, beautiful, strong, capacious, majestic. But would all men look at it alike? Paul thought that every one looking upon it would not give the same judgment about it; not that they would disagree about any part of it, but each would be so struck by one part of it as almost to neglect the rest.

¶ Let us imagine ourselves on board of a ship on that Ægean Sea; then, as we mix with those on board, let us go to some of them and ask them: "What do you see in that castle? What is your vision of it?" It is true that it is one castle, but, yet, what do men see in it? We go to one and we look at his mind, and we ask: "What do you see in that castle?" And he in reply says: "What magnificent *breadth* it has! Just look what a grand space of soil it covers! I cannot loose my mind from thinking how vast it is." We go to another and he says: "See the *length* of it! Look at the front it presents to this sea! What magnificent shelter and defence against inroad from the sea!" And we go to another and he says: "See the *height* of its walls! Who can scale those? The houses of yonder city, compared with it, are as pigmies beside a giant!" And if you go to another, he *sees the unseen.* He feels the majesty of the height, but if those walls are high, they must also be *deep*, he thinks. Ere that castle could stand, he knows there must be firm foundations; the walls must be going down deep. It is the mystery of their *depth* that he is thinking of.[1]

¶ How many men and women have sung about this temple, and have revelled in its strength and glory. Let us listen to one or two:—

O love how deep, how broad, how high!
It fills the heart with ecstasy
That Christ, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form, for mortals' sake.

And here is another singer:—

Jesus, Thy love unbounded,
So full, so sweet, so free,
Leaves all our thoughts confounded
Whene'er we think of Thee.

[1] **J. A. Davies,** *Seven Words of Love*, 138.

And here is a word of Samuel Rutherford which he wrote to Matthew Mowat when Mowat was in great distress: "I would not wish a better stock, while salvation be my stock, than to live upon credit at Christ's hands, daily borrowing. Surely running-over love—that vast, huge, boundless love of Christ which will try the skill of men and angels to tell—is the only thing I most fain would be in hands with. He knoweth that I have little of love beyond that love; and that I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven but only an eternal lasting feast on that love. Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness. If I had vessels I might fill them; but my old, riven and running-out dish, even when I am at the well, can bring little away. . . . How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand! As little do I take away of my great sea, my boundless and running-over Christ Jesus."[1]

(1) *The Breadth.*—Think of the love of Christ in its *breadth.* It is broad as the necessities of the world and as the expanse of the nations of the earth. It embraces all men—both Jews and Gentiles, the inhabitants of the Old World and those of the New, and men of all ages and generations. The Lord Jesus Christ, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," and His gospel is to be preached to "every creature." The great salvation is free as the air or the sunlight. Jesus unfolded the breadth and comprehensiveness of His love when He told His townsmen in His first sermon at Nazareth what He had come into the world to do. He came to pity and help the poor, and they are the world's sad majority in every age; He came to succour the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, and such-like. And does not every Gospel invitation bear upon the face of it the evidence of the boundless breadth of Jesus' love? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

¶ The conception of Christ by the Church is larger than that of any specific Church. He is in each, but is fuller and finer than

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Jan. 28, 1909.

any one of them represents Him to be. It is the Church universal which bodies forth the Christ, which reincarnates Him. Churches have their "family-likeness." We mean by family-likeness, that each face in a family has much in common with the others, yet its own individual character. Galton made interesting experiments with the portraits of the members of a family who had family-likeness, and found that when the portraits were cast one upon the other, so as to get a kind of "composite photograph," the result was not a blur and a blotch, but a new face, which was like each, but different from all. Churches have their family-likeness; put them all together and you get a new face, the face of Christ, which is like each, yet finer and grander than any one of them shows Him to be. I must know what all the saints see Him to be ere I know Him.[1]

¶ So long as I have a good conscience towards God, and have His sun to shine on me, and can hear the birds singing, I can walk across the earth with a joyful and free heart. Let them call me "broad." I desire to be broad as the charity of Almighty God, who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and the good; who hateth no man, and who loveth the poorest Hindoo more than all their committees or all their Churches. But while I long for that breadth of charity, I desire to be narrow—narrow as God's righteousness, which as a sharp sword can separate between eternal right and eternal wrong.[2]

¶ At Pretoria the town council has passed regulations forbidding the natives riding with white people on the trams; they must confine themselves to the occasional car which runs for coloured people only. They must not walk in the general park, or buy stamps in the general hall of the post office, or walk on the side pavements of the streets. So, you see, ordinary love has very severe limitations, and is apt to be very exclusive. Racial barriers impede it. Social barriers can check its flow. Ecclesiastical barriers can imprison it. But not so with the love of the Lord. It is not a little barricaded pool, but is like a tide, rolling in and obliterating the petty bulwarks of isolation built along the shore.[3]

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

[1] J. A. Davies, *Seven Words of Love*, 144.
[2] *Norman MacLeod, D.D.*, ii. 373.
[3] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Jan. 28, 1909.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given. . . .

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the Heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.[1]

(2) *The Length.*—To what length will the love of Christ go? There is many a runner who is good for a hundred yards, but who fails at the mile. There is many a soldier who is good at a battle, but who fails at the campaign. There is many an oarsman who is fine at a spurt, but faints at the long spin. "Ye did run well; what did hinder you?" They failed at the length. To what length can we go in our loving? When we begin to help a man, how far can we go with him? If we take up a bit of hard social service what is our staying power? It is well to ask questions like these before we turn to the Lord. For here is the way in which "the length" is described in the Word of God: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Having begun a good work in you, he will perfect it." Whenever the love of the Lord Jesus begins a ministry He never lays it down until He can say "It is finished."

¶ "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?—I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."—So said the Christ, multiplying perfection into itself twice—two sevens and a ten—in order to express the idea of boundlessness. And the law that He laid down for His servant is the law that binds Himself. What is the length of the love of Christ? Here is one measure of it,—howsoever long drawn out my sin may be, this is longer; and the white line of His love runs out into infinity, far beyond the point where the black line of my sin stops.[2]

[1] F. W. Faber.

[2] A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, 45.

¶ The strength of affection is a proof not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater mind cleaves to the smaller with more force than the other to it. A parent loves the child more than the child loves the parent; and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because His heart was infinitely larger.[1]

(3) *The Height.*—What is the height of His love? For love can have very small ambitions. A mother's love for her boy may soar no higher than wealth, or power, or distinction. And her love for her girl may be nothing but a desire that she be graceful, beautiful, admired, and that she may marry well and get a comfortable home. Love's aim always determines its height. You remember that word of Macaulay's mother: "I must have the wisdom of my child acknowledged by the angels before an assembled world." There is height. But turn to the height of the Lord's love: "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." It was the goal of His love that we should share His glory, and become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." It is the supreme quest of His love that we should sit with Him "in heavenly places," and partake with Him in all the fullness of grace.

¶ What we here can know or conceive of the *heights* of God may be to us like an infinite mountain-peak, eternally ascending above the highest-winged flight of created holiness and power—so that angel and archangel to Him are but like eagle or bright-winged insect which behold the snowy heights, still fixedly soaring, where their pinions and their very atmosphere fail. And yet if such a parable must be dwarfed into nothingness when once our parted spirits have caught one glimpse of God as He is; then, again, St. Paul may well pray that even here we may be able to grasp something for ourselves of what that height of God is, lest we should never exclaim—"He is beyond my utmost conception; and so I ever can know Him, never can love what is so separate from me. He is to me unknowable, unthinkable. He is to me as if He were not." Lest height should thus separate our souls

[1] F. W. Robertson.

from Him, He makes us know that His high Eternity is summed up, and shortly rendered in His love; and that love, though it be only ours, has a right to *know* love, though it be God's; a right to appropriate it, a right to dwell in Him, and in Him to advance for ever.[1]

(4) *The Depth.*—The love of Christ is profound as the uttermost abyss of human sin and wretchedness. We begin to see "the depth of the riches" of it when we reflect on the marvel that the Lord should have loved us at all. His love was not caused by anything in us, otherwise He could never have loved us. The natural condition of His people is unlovely and even loathsome in His sight. We recognize this when we look unto the rock whence we are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we are digged. But that vast, measureless love of His has gone away down far deeper than the lowest depths of human sin, "and underneath are the everlasting arms."

¶ Our love is so often only a narrow sentiment; we can so easily touch the bottom. It shines and shimmers like a white shore, but we can sail nothing in it. It is wanting in depth and therefore is lacking in deepness of ministry. Now turn to the Lord:

O love of God how deep and great,
Far deeper than man's deepest hate.

Let us lay hold of that most tremendous line. Let us grip it, or, better still, let it grip us. Take our own deepest hate, or the hate of any fiercely hating man whom we have known—deep, black, secretive and malignant as hell! And God's love is deeper than that! "He descended into hell." Yes, and He is still doing it! Some of us would never have been found unless He had found us there. We sometimes say of a man who has lost his heritage, and who would fain fill himself with the husks that the swine do eat, "He's got very low!" Yes, but the love of the Lord can go lower and deeper still. The vilest wretch who crawls the earth to-day may have the everlasting arms beneath him.

He came from on high to suffer and die,
To save a poor sinner like me.[2]

¶ The puzzle which baffles faith is, How can Christ understand and sympathize with man when He has never sinned? The monumental pile of righteousness that pillars the church and

[1] E. W. Benson, *Living Theology*, 7.

[2] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Jan. 28, 1909.

maintains social respectability may tell me what I ought to be. He may quote all the maxims and mottoes of virtue, and repeat the commandments and denounce the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," and thank God that he is "not as other men are," but what does he know about my conflict? His ravings about virtue do not help me; they depress and discourage and enrage me.

'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead!

I seek a Saviour who knows my road, not from His study of geography, but because He has travelled it. How can Christ do this when He has never sinned? He does it by the power of love. This is the miracle love works. It enables us to enter fully into all the struggles and aspirations of those we love. It so thoroughly puts our life into accord with another's that we are not only able to sympathize with what he suffers and enjoys, but we find it impossible not to do so. Love cannot escape this vicarious participation.[1]

V.

To Know the Love of Christ.

1. The true man desires to know, to understand, to apprehend. He is one who feels that the world is full of an attraction to his mind, to which he must yield, or forfeit his name of man. And there is nowhere a sweeter, more charming picture than that of a man who is a humble, eager student, filled with high thoughts and earnest ambitions; a man who can live "laborious days" and despise the common pleasures of the crowd; he is one who has kinship with the skies, and lives on the high places of the world.

¶ Browning, in one of his poems, "A Grammarian's Funeral," gives us a wonderful picture of a man eager and heroic in his quest after knowledge, and determined to strive to the last hour of his earthly life. They are now going to bury him—where? The appropriate country for such a man is not the "unlettered plain," but "a tall mountain, citied to the top, crowded with culture!" He belonged to the morning: his body must rest near the stars. And as the funeral cortège winds up the heights, we are given the picture of the man and his majestic quest. Men did not know

[1] J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 71.

him for a long time: "long he lived nameless." *We* leave work for play, but he was a man who "left play for work, and grappled with the world, bent on escaping," and when he was pitied, he "stepped on with pride over men's pity." Many of us begin a book, but do not read it from cover to cover; but when this man got the scroll of a bard or sage, he "straight got by heart that book to its last page." But some one would be ready to say: "Why trouble thus over books? Why burden the soul? This is the time to taste life! Up with the curtain!" "No," he would say; "even though I have read the crabbed text, still there is the comment. Most or least, painful or easy, these are not to be thought of by me. I must know all that books can give me." But men said: "Time passes! Live now or never!" And yet this was his grand intent—

> That before living he'd learn how to live—
> No end to learning;
> Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
> Use for our earning.

But is not life passing? Is it not very brief? No, "Man has Forever." And so he laboured lovingly on, his mind dragging the body after it, and in that dragging the body suffered. He was fierce as a dragon for knowledge, and believed great undertakings have slow profits. Life is too brief to see them. As the poet says:—

> That low man seeks a little thing to do,
> Sees it and does it;
> This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
> Dies ere he knows it.

And this man struggled on, was struggling at the last. When the rattle was in his throat,—

> So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
> Ground he at grammar;
> Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
> While he could stammer.

He was struggling with the unsolved problems of grammar, even though, as Browning vividly tells us, he was

> Dead from the waist down.

What a zeal for knowledge had that man! What an unquenchable thirst! What an imperious hunger for knowledge! Where ought such a man to be buried? Why, on the top of the mountain;

the top peak! And so Browning sings, "Here"—on the mountain top—

Here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.[1]

2. Paul was a man who wanted to *know*—to know the highest things. His soul was athirst for the highest, purest knowledge, even the knowledge of Christ and His love. And, like the true scholar, he wanted others to know and to know from others. He made it his business in life, next to knowing for himself, to make others know, to be their teacher.

¶ Some years ago—it is a good many years now—there was a lady, with a little girl of some three summers, travelling by coach in England from one town to another, and a young man got into the coach who was exceedingly clever; in fact, he thought himself so clever that he might dispense with all belief in the Bible and in God; and young as he was, he was the head of an infidel club in a certain city, whither he was then going to preside over their annual dinner that night. As the coach rolled on, the little girl became talkative, and soon she climbed up on the young man's knee, when to amuse her he showed her his penknife, and she liked that, and became quite at home. A few minutes before the coach stopped, she looked up in his face, and in a loud, clear voice she said to him, so that every one in the coach heard it, "Does 'oo love God? Does 'oo?" She was only three years old, remember. "Does 'oo love God?"[2]

3. What is this love of Christ?

(1) *It is a forgiving love.*—St. Paul in all his Epistles evinces extreme sensitiveness with regard to sin, and his own personal sin. He had felt its galling bondage, its crushing burden, its withering curse. He had been "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious." He had felt himself to be "carnal, sold under sin." He calls himself the "chief" of sinners. But now for a long time Christ had

[1] J. A. Davies, *Seven Words of Love*, 134.
[2] G. C. Grubb, *The Light of His Countenance*, 32.

been revealed to him as his personal Saviour. His faith rested upon the "obedience unto death" of the Son of God in his stead. His conscience reposed on the righteousness of Christ, and his heart was drawn by the magnet of Christ's love. St. Paul's attachment to Christ was enthusiasm for a personal Redeemer. It was a sense of redemption that made the Apostle what he now was. He never forgot that he was a poor sinner saved by Divine grace, and the thought bound his heart to his Saviour. He felt that it was a wonderful love that had redeemed him, and all the currents of his soul kept flowing with tremendous energy towards his Redeemer.

¶ I am reminded of the incident of a boy who had been tried by court-martial and ordered to be shot. The hearts of the father and mother were broken when they heard the news. In that home was a little girl. She had read the life of Abraham Lincoln, and she said: "Now, if Abraham Lincoln knew how my father and mother loved their boy, he would not let my brother be shot." She wanted her father to go to Washington to plead for his boy. But the father said: "No; there is no use; the law must take its course. They have refused to pardon one or two who have been sentenced by that court-martial, and an order has gone forth that the President is not going to interfere again; if a man has been sentenced by court-martial he must suffer the consequences." That father and mother had not faith to believe that their boy might be pardoned.

But the little girl was strong in hope; she got on the train away up in Vermont, and started off to Washington. When she reached the White House the soldiers refused to let her in; but she told her pitiful story, and they allowed her to pass. When she got to the Secretary's room, where the President's private secretary was, he refused to allow her to enter the room where the President was. But the little girl told her story, and it touched the heart of the private secretary; so he passed her in. As she went into Abraham Lincoln's room, there were United States senators, generals, governors, and leading politicians, who were there upon important business about the war; but the President happened to see that child standing at the door. He wanted to know what she wanted, and she went right to him and told her story in her own language. He was a father, and the great tears trickled down Abraham Lincoln's cheeks. He wrote a dispatch and sent it to the army to have that boy sent to Washington at once. When he arrived, the President pardoned him, gave him

thirty days' furlough, and sent him home with the little girl to cheer the hearts of the father and mother.[1]

(2) *It is a transforming love.*—It is a love that makes all things new, for St. Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." God wants to transform us. Transformation gives a man a new character, a new life, a new nature, and the Gospel is a gospel of transformation, not a gospel of reformation.

¶ At one of the missions last December there was a young man with whom the Spirit of God had been striving. Three times in one day he came up to the rectory drunk, and then we had prayer with him, and he gave himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. The next day he came up to the house in order to get a Bible, and one of the ladies who had seen him the day before came up to me and said, "Mr. Grubb, are you quite sure that that is the same man who was here yesterday?" And I said, "Yes, the same man, only he is a new creature in Christ Jesus to-day."[2]

(3) *It is a restoring love.*—The most sorrowful condition of soul in the world is that of a backslider, for a backslider can be satisfied with nothing; he cannot be satisfied with the world; he cannot be satisfied with sin; and he is not satisfied with Jesus. He knows what Christ was once to him; he knows that at one time in his life he used to love to pray; he knows that at one time in his life the society of Jesus was a reality to him; he knows that at one time in his life the Word of God used to speak to his heart; but all that has passed; Christ is a misty shadow to him now, if, indeed, there be such a person at all. Yet God is near, watching all the while over His wayward one, yearning for his return and using means to bring him back.

Love for all! and can it be?
Can I hope it is for me?
I, who strayed so long ago,
Strayed so far, and fell so low?

I, the disobedient child,
Wayward, passionate, and wild;
I, who left my Father's home
In forbidden ways to roam!

[1] D. L. Moody, *The Way to God*, 20.
[2] G. C. Grubb, *The Light of His Countenance*, 27.

I, who spurned His loving hold;
I, who would not be controlled;
I, who would not hear His call;
I, the wilful prodigal.

To my Father can I go?—
At His feet myself I'll throw:
In His house there yet may be
Place, a servant's place, for me.

See, my Father waiting stands;
See, He reaches out His hands:
God is love! I know, I see,
There is love for me,—even me [1]

VI.

A Love that Passes Knowledge.

1. What is it that so raises the Apostle's soul and gives him a tongue of fire? It is nothing that is beyond the feelings and sympathy of man. It is no mystery which only a few can penetrate, and which is not for the many. It is the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We can understand what love means. All can understand being touched and melted by love. True, he calls the "love of Christ" a love that passeth knowledge—a love so great and astonishing that no thought of man can embrace it in its fullness, or sound it in its depths. But though its unsearchableness adds to its wonder, it does not prevent us from understanding that it is love, love shown to us and felt for us in a way that it was never shown or felt before. This is what St. Paul is talking of, this is what sets his soul on fire.

And we have the same knowledge that he had of that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We have before us continually, in one form after another, that picture of Christ loving man which moved St. Paul so deeply. We have that history of love ever open before us, to which nothing done by man for man can compare. There have been men like ourselves, who have lived—as far as man can live—only for their fellow-men; who have spent their

[1] Samuel Longfellow.

lives in ministering to their good; who have taught them, and fed them, and healed them, and comforted them; who have spent this world's riches in providing, not for their own pleasure, but for the welfare of numbers who would never know or thank them; men who have left home and kindred to toil in the hardest and weariest way among the lost and the unthankful. And there have been women who have left ease and comfort, and all the tenderness in which they were nurtured, to attend on the sick, to minister to the forsaken and friendless sinner, to spend days of labour and sleepless nights in hospitals. We know what love means in these. But there was One, greater than they, who did more than any of them; who fed the hungry, and healed the sick, and taught the ignorant, and called back the wanderers, and was gentle and merciful to the sinners and the forsaken, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister; whose whole life was one endless display of love without stint, love careless of self, love doing its heavenly work without thanks, without return, without comfort. We hear sometimes of men, in their generous love to others, giving up what was their own, contenting themselves with a lower place, throwing up advantages, and coming down from a worldly position, in order to do more good to their fellows. But who among men came down as Christ did? Who among men gave up what He did, that He might cast in His lot with us? Who among men has *that* to throw away, for the good of his fellows, which Christ surrendered, when the Lord of the worlds became for us a little child, born in the lowest rank of life, born to poverty and neglect, without even where to lay His head?

¶ I could tell you, says one who himself was a great kinsman of the Lord, of friends who have been fifty years in Christ, and though they hold a constant jubilee in the sense of His love, yet they will tell you that they are only scholars in the lowest form, beginning to spell out the alphabet of the grace of our Lord Jesus. After fifty years in Christ, only just beginning to know, only just matriculated in the Academy of Love![1]

2. Why does the love of Christ surpass knowledge?

(1) *Because our experience of it is incomplete.*—We are like the settlers on some great island continent—as, for instance, on the Australian continent for many years after its first discovery—a

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Jan. 28, 1909.

thin fringe of population round the seaboard here and there, and all the bosom of the land untraversed and unknown. So after all experiences of and all blessed participation in the love of Jesus Christ which come to each of us by our faith, we have but skimmed the surface, but touched the edges, but received a drop of what, if it should come upon us in fullness of flood like a Niagara of love, would overwhelm our spirits.

¶ When St. Paul prays for the Ephesians that they may be able "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," he means, not that he desires they should ever come to think that they have explored all "the unsearchable riches of Christ," or are able to pronounce with confidence on all the reasons and modes of God's dealings with men; but that they should, through the indwelling spirit of Christ's own love in them, be led on to a deeper and ever deeper sense of the love with which He has loved them, to a firmer conviction that that love lies at the root of all their disciplines in life no less than of all their blessings, to a more perfect faith in it as the constant feeling, with which God's heart is moved towards them.

> They only miss
> The winning of that final bliss,
> Who will not count it true that love,
> Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
> And that in it we live and move.[1]

¶ Columbus discovered America; but what did he know about its great lakes, rivers, forests, and the Mississippi valley? He died without knowing much about what he had discovered. So, many of us have discovered something of the love of God; but there are heights, depths, and lengths of it we do not know. That Love is a great ocean; and we require to plunge into it before we really know anything of it.[2]

(2) *Because after all experience it will still be beyond our range.*— It is possible for people to have, and in fact we do possess, a real, a valid, a reliable knowledge of that which is infinite, although we possess, as a matter of course, no adequate and complete knowledge of it. But we have before us in Christ's love something which, though the understanding is not by itself able to grasp it, yet the understanding led by the heart can lay hold of, and can find in it infinite treasures. We can lay our poor hands on His

[1] R. H. Story, *Creed and Conduct*, 152.
[2] D. L. Moody, *The Way to God*, 9.

love as a child might lay its tiny palm upon the base of some great cliff, and hold that love in a real grasp of a real knowledge and certitude, but we cannot put our hands round it and feel that we *com*prehend as well as *ap*prehend.

¶ The love of God is the glory of love, the most orient pearl in the crown of it. It is not mercenary, nor self-ended, nor deserved; but as a spring or fountain it freely vents or pours out itself upon its own account. And what ingenuous, truly noble, heavenly-descended heart can hold out against the power of this love? Its *constancy* and *unchangeableness* is a star of eminent magnitude in the heaven of love. It is not a fading, a wavering, an altering thing, but abides for ever. It may be eclipsed and obscured, as to its beams and influence, for a season; but changed, turned away, it cannot be. And this consideration of it renders it to the souls of the saints inestimably precious. The very thought of it is marrow to their bones and health to their souls, and makes them cry out to all that is within them to love the Lord and to live unto Him.[1]

It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
My Saviour, Jesus: yet this soul of mine
Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
Know more and more.[2]

[1] John Owen, *The Perseverance of the Saints.* [2] Mary Shekleton.

Our High Calling.

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Our High Calling.

I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.—Eph. iii. 19.

1. In no part of St. Paul's letters does he rise to a higher level than in his prayers, and none of his prayers is fuller of fervour than this wonderful series of petitions. They open out one into the other like some majestic suite of apartments in a great palace-temple, each leading into a loftier and more spacious hall, each drawing nearer the presence-chamber, until at last we stand there.

¶ Meditating on this prayer is something like ascending an Alpine peak. The first hour or so is comparatively easy work. The giant flanks of the mountain are steep, but still their ascent is not over difficult; but, the higher you go, the steeper it becomes, until at last there is just that one glittering pinnacle towering above your head, and it seems to say, "Thus far, but no farther! Scale me if you can." But with the aid of a trusty guide, who cuts steps in the very ice for us, and who lends us the strength of his arm, we are able to gain the summit, and drink in with our eyes the grandeur of the scene.[1]

2. There can be nothing above or beyond this wonderful petition. Rather, it might seem as if it were too much to ask, and as if, in the ecstasy of prayer, Paul had forgotten the limits that separate the creature from the Creator, as well as the experience of sinful and imperfect men, and had sought to "wind himself too high for mortal life beneath the sky." And yet Paul's prayers are God's promises; and we are justified in taking these rapturous petitions as being distinct declarations of God's desire and purpose for each of us; as being the end which He had in view in the unspeakable gift of His Son; and as being the certain outcome of His gracious working on all believing hearts.

[1] A. G. Brown.

¶ Filled unto all the *fulness* of God: who shall ever unfold the meaning of this expression to us? How shall we ever reach any definite idea of what it signifies? God has made provision for our enlightenment. In Christ Jesus we see a Man full of God, a man who was perfected by suffering and obedience, filled unto all the fulness of God: yea, a Man who, in the solitariness and poverty of an ordinary human life, with all its needs and infirmities, has nevertheless let us see on earth the life enjoyed by the inhabitants of heaven, as they are there filled unto all the fulness of God.[1]

¶ The main theme common to both the Colossian and Ephesian Epistles is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the relation of believers to Him. Isolated from the bustling activities of life, debarred from aggressive missionary work, limited to the few friends that visited him in his hired room, the Apostle is driven to contemplate the innermost realities of life, and to dwell upon the cardinal truths of revealed religion. His thoughts at such a time found centre in one truth—the Person of Christ, as the one mediating agent in both the natural and the spiritual world (Col. i. 13–23, Eph. i. 7–14). It was this that he came to feel was the rock on which alone his own feet could safely rest; it was this that he could boldly put forward as the antidote to the erroneous teaching at Colossæ; it was this alone that could enable those to whom he wrote in the Churches of Asia to become "full-grown men," and to attain to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The two Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians must therefore be studied side by side. The central truth is the same in both; the point of view, and therefore the range of vision, is slightly different. Dealing with the Colossian danger, the Apostle meets it with the great doctrine of the fulness of Christ. That was the answer to all their questionings as to the relation between God and man, and between God and this material world. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In the Epistle to the Ephesians this fact is presupposed, and the Apostle goes on to argue from it the Church's fulness in Christ. "He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Mark, again, the climax of his prayer —"that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." And thus the lessons of the two letters seem to be summed up in the simple but fully reasoned argument of Colossians ii. 9, 19: "In Christ is all the fulness: ye are in Him: in Him—complete—made full."[2]

[1] A. Murray, *The Full Blessing of Pentecost*, 132.
[2] T. W. Drury, *The Prison-Ministry of St. Paul*, 154.

I.

FILLED.

"That ye may be filled." That is to say, Paul's prayer and God's purpose and desire concerning us is, that our whole being may be so saturated and charged with an indwelling Divinity that there shall be no room in our present stature and capacity for more, and no sense of want or aching emptiness.

1. What is it to be filled with God? It is to have as much of God within us as our nature can contain. How this truth is overlooked. There is a natural tendency on the part of us all to dwell with exquisite delight on the other side of the question, namely, how we are accepted in the Beloved—how we are in Christ; and, perhaps, we dwell on that thought to the exclusion of this, that not only are we in God, but God is in us; that, whilst we are accepted in the Beloved, He is pleased to make our heart His abiding rest, His chamber, and His temple. Not only can the believer shout, "Emmanuel, God, *with* us," he can also say, "Christ, the Lord, *within* us." We think that a low experience spiritually is a necessity. If you talk to them, there are many who will say, "Well, but is it not rather utopian to expect, whilst we are on earth, to be full of joy, and to be full of peace, and to be full of triumph? Do not we carry about with us this body of sin and death, and ought we not to expect much darkness and sorrow of soul, and be very thankful if occasionally we get a few gleams of light?" This is not in the Word. The teaching of this Book is for us to expect to walk in the light, and when we are not in the light to ask the reason why.

¶ We see the river Nile flowing through Egypt in the times of drought, a river indeed, but the bed is not covered or the banks reached, nor is there fertilizing richness deposited in the fields. But later we see the Nile, when the sources are sending abundant supply, and the stream is spreading over all the channel, and the water is even with the banks, and the fields are rejoicing on every side. The Nile is "filled." A heart "filled"; not merely having here and there a few experiences of the richness of God's grace, but filled, every part of it, with that grace![1]

[1] J. G. K. McClure, *Loyalty the Soul of Religion*, 232.

¶ In his address to Cornelius and his household Peter tells us that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth" "with the Holy Ghost and with power," that is, with the power of the Holy Ghost. And what next? What would we expect to follow such a statement but the words we find?—"Who went about doing good." Filled with this fulness, we cannot do other, it is then our very nature, our very life to go about doing good.[1]

My Father, can it be
That Thou hast willed
Such an inheritance for me?
That I with all Thy fulness should be filled—
That Thine own Life with all its glorious light,
And love, and purity, and wondrous might,
And depth of grace,
In me should find a dwelling-place?
Is this the hidden thing—
The mystery which long hath slept,
In Thine eternal counsels kept—
That from the source, the everlasting spring,
Thyself, should flow,
Through Thine own Son,
To me, the Life which makes the Head and Body One?
Yea, Thou hast said it, and I know
It is Thy will
Thy temple thus to fill—
To give no less
Than all! I may possess
The fulness! I may be
Complete in Him by whom I live—
Who comes again to give
Himself—the Life that fills my soul with Thee![2]

2. To be filled with God we must first be emptied. Such emptying we fear. What will God wish of us if He has entire occupancy of our desires and purposes? It may be that He will ask us to change our desires, to give up present ambitions, to enter upon entirely new courses of business, and study, and pleasure. Perfect surrender to the infilling of God may mean a sacrifice as great on our part as was Abraham's when he was called to go out he knew not where; it may necessitate the sub-

[1] T. Waugh, *Twenty-Three Years a Missioner*, 109.
[2] Edith Hickman Divall, *A Believer's Songs*, 108.

version of all our past and the adoption of a wholly new standard of procedure. Many a man is unwilling to face such a situation. We wish some standing ground, some reservation somewhere, for ourselves. We are ready to let God have a portion of our heart, that portion where honesty, gentlemanly conduct, purity, and even benevolence are; but we dare not let Him "fill" us, for then not one inch would be left for anything of our own.

Yet it is absurd for any of us to think of being filled with God's fulness so long as we are under the dominion of any purely earthly or temporal wishes, or desires, or ambitions, or passions, or tastes. The words imply a totality of self-surrender to God. In praying to be filled with God the Father's fulness, we pray that all our powers and faculties and desires and energies and likes and dislikes may be just what they would be if all our merely earthly desires were taken out of us, all that is selfish and mean and bad were emptied out of us, and the vacant space filled up by a pouring in of the character of God our Father. It is the same as praying that we may be just what God would be if we could imagine God to be put in our place.

¶ If we say that religion is the absolute surrender of the soul to God, the surrender derives its meaning and value from this, that it is a conscious self-surrender—that it is not the meaningless rapture of the mystic striving after an impossible self-annihilation, but the "joy in God" of the spirit which, in the inmost depths of its being, thrills with the consciousness of unimpeded union with the life of the Infinite.[1]

¶ The evil seed sown in me when a child—a relative having thoughtlessly taken me to the pantomime in London—grew into an overshadowing passion for the theatre. The good seed of my godly old schoolmaster was not altogether expelled by it, sometimes I experienced searching heart questionings on this matter which would not be silenced, and gradually so worked within me that, as a young man, I have sat in the pit, seeing not, hearing not, save the stirring Spirit of God bringing me into condemnation for refusing to yield up my darling pleasure, whilst I trembled with fear for disobedience. At last I yielded partially, making a compromise that I would cease regular attendance, and be present only on those occasions when Helen Faucit, that supremely gifted actress, came to Manchester. But the voice would not be silenced,

[1] John Caird.

and at last I utterly broke from the toils, and resolved to visit the theatre no more, no matter what temptation it held out. Then peace flowed into my soul. Few of this age will read this with any understanding, but I know this passion for theatrical entertainments was gradually eating away all spiritual desires, and that, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," and that indulgence in it would have made me unfit for the labour God purposed for His servant eventually.[1]

¶ This is the supreme necessity—a definite self-surrender. You remember the story of John Newton's conversion. In early manhood he was a profligate sailor on board an African slaver. "I was," he says, "a wild beast on the coast of Africa, but the Lord caught and tamed me." The Holy Spirit had long dealings with him, and one night he had a dream. He dreamed that he was handling a rope on deck and a ring which he prized slipped off his finger and sank in the sea. He was greatly distressed, when he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning round, he saw a stranger with the ring in his hand. "You have lost it," said the stranger, "and you will lose it again. Let me keep it for you." He understood the parable when he awoke, and gave his precious soul into the keeping of Jesus and left it with Him. This is the way of peace: Commit yourself to Christ, and keep on renewing the deposit day by day.[2]

3. But we must remember how St. Paul leads up to these words. We shall then better understand their meaning. The Apostle prays God for his disciples at Ephesus that they may be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith"; and that they, "being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"; that they may "be *filled unto all the fulness of God.*" Now the whole of this prayer helps to explain these last words.

(1) First, the Apostle prays that the Ephesians may be "strengthened with power through" God's "*Spirit* in the inward man." And how can we be "filled unto all the fulness of God" except by His *Spirit* filling us? We believe, with the whole Church, that the Holy Spirit is God. If then the Holy Spirit dwells in the inward man, God dwells there. "To be filled with the Spirit" is to be filled with God.

[1] *The Life and Letters of Frederic Shields*, 30. [2] David Smith.

¶ The Spirit is the Spirit of power—"strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." This means that the whole moral nature must be in touch with God, and so strengthened by that contact as to be the expression of God's power.[1]

(2) But if God's Holy Spirit does dwell within us, then we shall have *faith*; then Christ will dwell in our hearts by faith. This is the second blessing asked for in the Apostle's prayer. Faith, like every other grace, is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not of ourselves, "it is the gift of God." And behold then how by faith we are "filled unto all the fulness of God." For Christ, who is God, dwells in our hearts by faith. Faith is the faculty within us which receives the Saviour. He cannot come where there is no faith. The door is, as it were, shut against Him. And the greater our faith, the more fully and constantly will Christ abide with us. True faith sets the door wide open for the Saviour to pass in. But how do we speak of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith? In two ways: Both because He really visits and abides in the heart which has faith to receive Him, and because that faith feels and realizes His presence.

¶ Perhaps we are venturing where God means us not to enter, when we seek to understand the *manner* of Christ's indwelling presence. It is a Divine mystery; and we believe it, because it is revealed to us. Yet we may perhaps say this much, that, when in one place we read of *Christ* dwelling in our hearts, and in another place of having the *Spirit of Christ*, these two expressions declare the same thing, and that to have Christ dwelling in us is, in truth, to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. It is this that St. John speaks of when he says, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Yet to have Christ dwelling in us must mean, after all, something more than to be filled with the Holy Ghost,—the Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*. It must at least mean to be so filled with that Holy Spirit as to be fashioned like unto Christ,—to have Christ *formed* in us,—to have in us that mind which was also in Christ Jesus. And I think it must also mean to possess the priceless blessing of Christ's special love and favouring presence. And this we both possess and know by *faith*. Faith receives the Saviour. And Faith realizes the Saviour's presence. By Faith we feel His love, His nearness, His ever-present help. By Faith

[1] E. Trumbull Lee.

we contemplate His purity, and holiness, and perfect example. By Faith we trust in His merits, His sacrifice, His prevailing intercessions. And thus Christ dwells in our hearts by Faith; and we are "filled unto all the fulness of God." [1]

(3) There is a third way in which we may be "filled with all the fulness of God." It is by being "rooted and grounded in *love*." Surely we can see that unless we are filled with love we can in no wise think that we are filled with God. For "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Faith *receives* the fulness of God. Love *is* the fulness of God.

Strange as it may seem, it is undeniably true that the sovereign method for the deepest, fullest spiritual life is constant and appreciative remembrance of the love of God—its length, its breadth, its height, its depth. There is nothing a soul is to do but try to comprehend that love, in all its features and in all its expressions, and then make it the permanent, continuous, and controlling power of all its thought and feeling. To study God's love, to get the fact of it, the greatness of it, the sweetness of it, the constancy of it, the comfort of it into one's heart is to feel the nearness, dearness, and blessedness of God Himself. The mind that with each opportunity for leisure turns to the consideration of God's love, that believes in that love for itself, that sees life in the light of that love, and that lets that love flow in upon it with ocean-fulness, will have such a sense of the presence, beauty, and power of God as will make that heart a holy of holies; God Himself will be in it, and His glory will fill it.

¶ The love of God is as various as the world which God hath made, and there is no state of mind and no circumstances of life to which that love will not fit its gift. The Christian, the longer he lives, the more sure he becomes that God has loved him from the very first; that not even his own many sins have quenched that unquenchable fire; that not even when his own heart was coldest and his thoughts most far from heaven, did God forget the creature that He had made; that even into grievous sin and even into strange hardness of heart did God's unwearied love pursue him and will pursue him yet. And so, when the Christian thinks of himself, he knows that he may fall; but when he thinks of God it seems impossible that God should let him. And in this

[1] W. W. How, *Plain Words*, ii. 214.

thought he lives a more heavenly life, he cherishes a surer hope, he is more cheerful, he is more joyous every day. For he knows that God loves him, and while this is present to his mind, he cannot go wilfully away. He is God's son; how can he quit his own Father?

Our human sight is short and dim. We cannot always look on beyond the present to God's sure purpose to give us His blessing. But all the more ought we to write it down as with a pen of iron on our own souls, that whatever else we read in the life of Christ, we read first of all, and above all, and through all, the assurance of the all-searching love of God. If the life be careless, bring back the mind to that; if the heart be unhappy or discontented, compel the thoughts to that; if the habits of our daily walk cause us many a conflict between conscience and inclination, anchor the will on that. For most certainly it cannot fail. God's love never can, and never did, and never will.[1]

II.

The Fulness of God.

1. "Filled *unto* (R.V., not *with*, as in A.V.) all the fulness of God." This suggests the idea not of a completed work but of a process, and of a growing process, as if more and more of that great fulness might pass into a man. Suppose a number of vessels, according to the old illustration about degrees of glory in Heaven; they are each full, but the quantity that one contains is much less than that which the other may hold. Add to the illustration that the vessels can grow, and that filling makes them grow; as a shrunken bladder when you pass gas into it will expand and round itself out, and all the creases will be smoothed away. So the Apostle's idea here is that a process of filling goes on which may satisfy the desires of the moment, because it fills us up to the then capacities of our spirits, but which, in the very process of so filling and satisfying, makes those spirits capable of containing larger measures of His fulness, which therefore flow into it.

> Is this wide world not large enough to fill thee,
> Nor Nature, nor that deep man's Nature, Art?
> Are they too thin, too weak and poor to still thee,
> Thou little heart?

[1] Archbishop Temple.

Dust art thou, and to dust again returnest,
A spark of fire within a beating clod,
Should that be infinite for which thou burnest?
Must it be God?[1]

¶ There are plants which we sometimes see in our northern latitudes, but which are native to the more generous soil and the warmer skies of southern lands. In their true home they grow to a greater height, their leaves are larger, their blossoms more luxuriant and of a colour more intense; the power of the life of the plant is more fully expressed. And as the visible plant is the more or less adequate translation into stem and leaf and flower of its invisible life, so the whole created universe is the more or less adequate translation of the invisible thought and power and goodness of God. He stands apart from it. His personal life is not involved in its immense processes of development; but the forces by which it moves through pain and conflict and tempest towards its consummate perfection are a revelation of His "eternal power and Godhead." For the Divine idea to reach its complete expression, an expression adequate to the energy of the Divine life, we ourselves must reach a large and harmonious perfection. As yet we are like plants growing in an alien soil and under alien skies. And the measures of strength and grace which are possible to us even in this mortal life are not attained. The Divine power which is working in us is obstructed. But a larger knowledge of the love of Christ will increase the fervour of every devout and generous affection; it will exalt every form of spiritual energy; it will deepen our spiritual joy; it will add strength to every element of righteousness; and will thus advance us towards that ideal perfection which will be the complete expression of the Divine power and grace, and which Paul describes as the "fulness of God."[2]

2. We have, then, as the promise that gleams from these great words, this wonderful prospect, that the Divine love, truth, holiness, joy, in all their rich plenitude of all-sufficient abundance, may be showered upon us. The whole Godhead is our possession. For the fulness of God is no far-off remote treasure that lies beyond human grasp and outside of human experience. Do not we believe that, to use the words of this Apostle in another letter, "it pleased the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell"? Do we not believe that, to use the words of the same Epistle, "In

[1] Mary E. Coleridge. [2] R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, 257.

Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"? Is not that abundance of the resources of the whole Deity insphered and incarnated in Jesus Christ our Lord, that it may be near us, and that we may put out our hand and touch it? This may be a paradox for the understanding, full of metaphysical puzzles and cobwebs, but, for the heart that knows Christ, most true and precious. God is gathered into Jesus Christ, and all the fulness of God, whatever that may mean, is embodied in the Man Christ Jesus, that from Him it may be communicated to every one that is willing. For, to quote words of another of the New Testament teachers, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." And to quote words in another part of this Epistle, we may all come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." High above us, then, and inaccessible though that awful thought, "the fulness of God," may seem, as the zenith of the unscaleable heavens seems to us poor creatures creeping here upon the flat earth, it comes near, near, near, ever nearer, and at last tabernacles among us, when we think that in Him all the fulness dwells; and it comes nearer yet and enters into our heart when we think that "of his fulness have all we received."

¶ The doubting question of all time is, "Will God dwell with men?" That God will actually enter a human heart and fill it with His fulness seems too good to be true. As a reviewer of Drummond's *Ascent of Man* puts it, "And so the author's purpose is to prove scientifically that God is love, a teaching that seems to many too good to be true." But it is not too good to be true. The God who makes the cup to overflow, who scatters flowers over prairies in profusion, who sets not twenty, nor hundreds, but thousands upon thousands of stars in the heavens—that God can and will enter the soul with His spiritual fulness.[1]

(1) The constitution of man admits this fulness. "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him." Fulness and God are inseparable, and equally united are fulness and the image of God. There is a natural capacity for "fulness" in man, which has not been destroyed by the entrance of the foreign element of sin.

(2) The redemption that is in Christ Jesus specially provides for this fulness. It restores lost truths and lost objects of hope

[1] J. G. K. McClure, *Loyalty the Soul of Religion*, 235.

and love and joy, and directly aims at filling us with all possible good.

The experience of every Christian is that of having supplied to him, by the Saviour, that which, being essential, has nevertheless been lacking. The Saviour of men appears to those who come to Him, as the morning star and the rising sun after the darkest of winter nights. He appears as a rock of foundation to a builder who has utterly despaired of finding any foundation better than sand. He appears as bread to one dying of hunger, and as water to one perishing of thirst. He appears as a robe of righteousness to one whose attire is filthy rags. He appears as the friend that sticketh closer than a brother to one who is outcast and desolate. He comes as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and those who receive Him are complete in Him.

(3) The exceeding great and precious promises of God show that those who lack fulness or completeness are straitened, not in God, but through themselves. All that is needful for a true Christian they can have. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

¶ I think there is something implanted in man's heart, fallen creature as he is, which defies him to be content with anything but God alone. It is a trace of original majesty, which leaves a mark of what he was before the fall. He is always panting for something fresh; and that is no sooner attained than it palls upon his taste. And this strong necessity of loving something makes a man form idols for himself, which he invests with fancied perfections, and when all these fade away in his grasp, and he finds their unsubstantiality, he must either become a misanthrope or a Christian. When a man has learned to know the infinite love of God in Christ to him, then he discovers something which will not elude his hold, and an affection which will not grow cold; for the comparison of God's long-suffering and repeated pardon with his own heartless ingratitude convinces him that it is an unchangeable love.[1]

When all the over-work of life
  Is finished once, and fast asleep
We swerve no more beneath the knife
  But taste that silence cool and deep;

[1] *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson*, 57.

Forgetful of the highways rough,
  Forgetful of the thorny scourge,
  Forgetful of the tossing surge,
Then shall we find it is enough?

How can we say "enough" on earth—
  "Enough" with such a craving heart?
I have not found it since my birth,
  But still have bartered part for part.
I have not held and hugged the whole,
  But paid the old to gain the new:
  Much have I paid, yet much is due,
Till I am beggared sense and soul.

Not in this world of hope deferred,
  This world of perishable stuff:—
Eye hath not seen nor ear hath heard
  Nor heart conceived that full "enough":
Here moans the separating sea,
  Here harvests fail, here breaks the heart:
  There God shall join and no man part,
I full of Christ and Christ of me.[1]

III.

All the Fulness of God.

When he asks for "*all* the fulness," St. Paul thinks of other elements of revelation in which we are to participate. God's *wisdom*, His *truth*, His *righteousness*, along with His *love* in its manifold forms—all the qualities that, in one word, go to make up His holiness—are communicable and belong to the image stamped by the Holy Spirit on the nature of God's children. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" is God's standing command to His sons. So Jesus bids His disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

¶ While the holiness of God gathers up into one stream of white radiance the revelation of His character, "the fulness of God" spreads it abroad in its many-coloured richness and variety. The term accords with the affluence of thought that marks this supplication. The might of the Spirit that strengthens weak

[1] Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 192.

human hearts, the greatness of the Christ who is the guest of our faith, His wide-spreading Kingdom and the vast interests it embraces and His own love surpassing all—these objects of the soul's desire issue from the fulness of God; and they lead us in pursuing them, like streams pouring into the ocean, back to the eternal Godhead. The mediatorial kingdom has its end: Christ, when He has "put down all rule and authority," will at last "yield it up to his God and Father": and "the Son himself will be subjected to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24–28). This is the crown of the Redeemer's mission, the end which His love to the Father seeks. But when that end is reached, and the soul with immediate vision beholds the Father's glory, the plenitude will be still new and unexhausted; the soul will then begin its deepest lessons in the knowledge of God which is life eternal.[1]

(1) To have all the fulness of God is to be full of *joy*.—"These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 11). In the following chapter and the 24th verse, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." And in the following chapter and the 13th verse, our Lord prays, "And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves," or, in other words, "that they may be filled full with my joy."

¶ Joy, which was the small publicity of the pagan, is the gigantic secret of the Christian.[2]

¶ She really cared for nothing but the life of the spirit. The sources of joy were very far removed from the surface of things for her. They were in the inner recesses and not subject to sudden changes of weather like a brawling mountain torrent. To some extent this belief that God was in all creation made her a little self-centred. She was like one who sits at a warm fireside in the winter time heedless of storms and tempests outside. She did what her own heart asked her to do. She liked to quote: "I must be filled with joy if my feet are on the right road and my face set towards 'the gate that is called Beautiful,' though I may fall many times in the mire and often in the mist go astray."[3]

(2) It is to be full of *peace*.—"Now the God of hope fill you

[1] G. G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 202.
[2] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 296.
[3] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 60.

with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope." Joy is peace singing; peace is joy reposing.

¶ If peace means satisfaction, acceptance of the whole of an experience as good, and if even we, in our weakness, can frequently find rest in the very presence of conflict and of tension, in the very endurance of ill in a good cause, in the hero's triumph over temptation, or in the mourner's tearless refusal to accept the lower comforts of forgetfulness, or to wish that the lost one's preciousness had been less painfully revealed by death—well, if even we know our little share of this harmony in the midst of the wrecks and disorders of life, what limit shall we set to the Divine power to face this world of His own sorrows, and to find peace in the victory over all its ills?[1]

¶ Take a water-bottle, and if that water-bottle be only half full, every time you move the bottle, the water in it washes to and fro. Why? How is it that it feels every motion? Because it is not full. But if you fill that water-bottle right up till it cannot hold another drop, and then cork it in, you may turn the bottle which way you like, and the water within it will not move. There is no movement, no washing about. Why? Because it is *too full to be agitated.* The reason why you and I live such poor restless lives is that we are not filled up with the fulness of God.[2]

¶ When she knew that she was close by the opening gateway of death, I asked her if she desired to see any one who would speak to her of what was to come. "That would be but a waste of time," she replied, "I have always been ready. Let us praise God together for what has been. He has been very good to me in giving me my work, my friends, and my faith. At the end of the day I go gladly to Him for rest and shelter." She was convinced that life and time were not the sum and substance of experience, and went away as though but starting upon a journey which, beginning in darkness, would proceed through light. She would hold my hand, she said, till those who had gone before gave her greetings.[3]

(3) It is to be full of *righteousness.*—In Phil. i. 11 we read, "Filled with the fruits of righteousness"—not just a stray fruit here and there upon our boughs, but all our boughs filled with fruit until, through the very weight of their load, they bend down and kiss the ground. The more fruitful the branch the lower it will hang. The more fruit there is upon a believer, the less

[1] Josiah Royce. [2] A. G. Brown.
[3] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 62.

conceit and pride there will be about him. The branch, heavily laden, bends beneath the weight of its own fruitfulness.

¶ What an aspiration for a band of fishermen, peasants, slaves! It was an aspiration after more than Roman dominion, after more than Judaic empire. The proudest dreams of Pantheism never dared to soar so high. The Brahman had aspired to be lost in God, to have the little spark of his individual being absorbed in the mighty fire of the universe; that was rather humility than pride. Here was a company of men aspiring to reach God yet not to be lost in God, aiming to touch the brightness of the Infinite Glory without losing the spark of their own individual being. Was not this presumption, was not this impiety, was not this fitted to destroy all the tender graces of the Christian life—the poverty of spirit which had been promised the Kingdom, the meekness of heart which was to inherit the earth?

Nay, but who *was* this God with whose fulness they desired to be filled? His name was Love. If His name had been aught else than Love the desire of these men would have been indeed presumption. But to be filled with the fulness of love is not pride; it is the deepest, the most intense humility. He that is filled with love is thereby made the servant of all; he repeats the life of the Divine Man, and becomes heir to His burden. To him belong sorrows not his own. He labours in the labour of humanity, he suffers in the tears of affliction, he is wounded in the battle of the weak. His glory is his pain. That which fills him with God is that which fills him with sadness, which bows him down with the sense of nothingness; the love that makes him great is the power that makes him gentle.[1]

¶ They speak of ideals. But they cannot separate man's ideals from the Man Christ Jesus. They speak of truth. Questions about truth involve the question, What about Christ? They speak to us of goodness. And—more faintly or more vividly, more lightly or more seriously—does there not rise on their memory a Face, marred more than any man's, that carries an image and message of goodness, leaving all else of goodness behind it and below it?[2]

[1] George Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, 129.

[2] *The Life of Principal Rainy*, ii. 174.

Grieving the Spirit.

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Grieving the Spirit.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.—Eph. iv. 30.

St. Paul is charging the Ephesians to be careful not to forget or to despise some of the common duties of everyday life. He is telling them to speak the truth, to beware of foolish talking, to be industrious and honest, kind and charitable, to put away bitterness and evil-speaking, to be slow to take offence, and ready to forgive. And in the midst of these separate exhortations we find words of a very different kind, the words of the text, words which are so placed as to be the very centre and kernel of the whole, summing up in themselves the substance of all that has gone before and of all that comes after. For he speaks in them, not of any one particular duty, but of a rule of life from which all duties must most surely spring. He gives no new commandment, but he tells of a glorious guide. He speaks of a tender love which is watching us anxiously as we go up and down in the business or the pleasures of the day, of a Friend who has marked us out for the "day of redemption," and is disappointed in us, grieved, distressed when we turn our backs upon Him and treat Him lightly. For such seems to be the meaning of the text—"Do not give pain to One who so loves you. He has come to your rescue, He has sealed you for a blessing; therefore, I beseech you, grieve Him not."

¶ Milton wrote his great poem, actuated by the strong desire that men might remember him and think of him long after he was dead: you remember the touching words in which he himself tells us so. And the little boy at the village school works his hardest to gain his prize, because he thinks how it will please his mother. You would not care much for any distinction you might get, or any success, if there were no one but yourself to know of it or to care for it. And you know whether, coming next after God's grace, there

be anything that does more to keep a youth, cast alone amid the temptations of a great city, in the right path, than the keeping up of the old home-feeling; and whether there be a safeguard more effectual than the ready suggestion of the great motive that grows out of it. What greater stimulus to duty than this?—"Now, you will be industrious, and honest, and good; and make them all happy at home!" And what healthier consideration in an hour of temptation to do wrong than that which comes first and most natural: "Oh, you will not do *that*, and break your mother's heart!" It hath pleased God, in the words of the text, to appeal to us with just that homely consideration. "Grieve not"—the words are spoken to all of us—"the Holy Spirit of God."[1]

I.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit.

1. This is a classical passage in proof of the personality of the Spirit of God. The very fact that we may grieve Him implies His personality. He is more than an abstraction. Our mental attitude towards an attribute, an emanation, an influence, or an abstraction of any kind, would be very different from that which we instinctively assume towards the third Person of the blessed Trinity. Scripture does not shrink from speaking of God as being capable of feelings which for us can be represented only under human forms of emotion; God is represented as "being pleased," as "joying," as "delighting" in the love and obedience of His people, and He is also represented as "grieved," "offended," "angry," "alienated," by their sin; and we need not hesitate to follow where the Bible leads us. Indeed, it may be questioned whether God would be all that He is in His adorable and infinite nature if He were incapable of feeling both pleasure and pain; perfect love must mean the possibility of both. An old writer has said of the nature of God, "In the outer chambers may be sadness, but in the inner ones is unmixed joy."

¶ There is a gap, not only in our Christian creed, but also in our Christian experiences and joys and power, unless we have risen to this thought, that the Divine Spirit is not only an influence, a wind, a fire, an oil, a dove, a dew, but a Divine Person.

[1] A. K. H. Boyd, *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 2nd Ser., 55.

We have to go back to the old creed—"I believe in God the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost."[1]

2. The Holy Spirit is always with us, a constant companion, and nothing is hid from Him. In this He witnesses to us the omnipresence of God; He makes God's existence real to us, wherever we happen to be. However vast the numbers of the human race, the Holy Spirit is with every individual and knows every individual's life. Do we speak a word? It falls upon the Spirit's ear, as well as upon the ear of the person to whom we speak. Do we perform any action, good or bad? The Holy Spirit sees it and records it. Do we even think a thought? That thought is mirrored in the multitudinous mind of the Divine Spirit. We cannot escape from His presence.

¶ Over the door of a church in Hamburg is a piece of statuary. In a marble chair sits a man upon whose knee rests a parchment. On this parchment his eyes are fixed, and in his right hand he holds a pen with which he seems to be writing. It is John the Evangelist. He thinks himself alone, yet he is not. An angel stands behind him gazing intently over his shoulder upon the parchment, and with his right hand he guides the pen. So the Holy Spirit is ever present with us, seeking to direct us.

3. Though more than an emanation or an influence, and though continually witnessing our character and our ways, the Holy Spirit is so gentle and sensitive that you never read of His wrath. You read of the wrath of God the Father; you read even of the wrath of the Lamb. But you never read of the wrath of the Spirit: and the imagery employed to describe Him and His influence on mankind is of the gentlest possible character. We have, for instance. the dew that descends silently from heaven, the rain that comes down upon the mown grass, the wind that rustles the leaves of the trees, or that sweeps away the clouds from the fair face of the sky; and if, as is once the case, the coming of this supernatural guest is symbolized by the fire and the tornado, the fire is that which gleams in harmless flame over the thoughtful brows of the first Christian disciples gathered together in the rough upper room; and the tornado is that which overthrows and destroys nothing, but only announces, by an over-

[1] A. Maclaren.

powering sound, the presence of God, and bids the people assemble together to listen to His overtures of mercy. The Holy Ghost, then, is emphatically gentle and tender and kind. He excites no emotions of alarm, and yet we feel that, if He is a Being capable of entering into personal relations with us, our belief of this capability will necessarily influence in a marked degree the sentiments which we entertain towards Him, and the trust which we are inclined to repose in His help. And when we know the gentleness of the Spirit in His dealing with us, surely we shall deal gently with others.

¶ It was indeed a gift of his nature to find out excellences, and to avoid seeing failure; although the gift was not needed in this case, where the real genius had existed and been attested. But its possession was well known to his friend "Ned Jones," who once said, "Signor admires paintings that would make very good soles for his boots!" I remember repeating to my husband a remark of Mr. Du Maurier's on the lenient view he always took of the foibles and faults of human nature; alas, I cannot now recall the humorous saying, at which Signor laughed heartily, and said, "Any affection that has been given to me, I am sure is due to the fact that it is difficult for me not to see the best in people. I think I am not deceived, but their good qualities are uppermost to me."[1]

II.

How we may Grieve the Spirit.

1. The Apostle has been referring to certain sins, such as falsehood, anger, bitterness, corrupt speech, and after warning his readers against them, he adds, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." It is sin, then, that grieves Him, sin that pains Him; and this is exactly the answer we should have expected, for He is the "Holy Spirit of God," and all, therefore, that is evil and sinful He hates with a perfect hatred, and is "grieved" by it. The character of a man is always revealed as much by his deepest sorrows as by his highest joys. And the character of God is revealed in all its purity and holiness by the fact that the only thing in human life that grieves Him is sin.

¶ A great difficulty with many is that they want power with-

[1] Mrs Watts, *George Frederic Watts*, i. 171.

out purity and happiness without holiness; hence, when God puts His finger upon unclean and unlawful things, they shrink from the cost of renouncing them, and thus make it impossible for their prayer to be answered. There are in most lives mountains to be levelled, valleys to be exalted, crooked things to be made straight, and rough places to be made plain before the glory of the Lord can be revealed, and it is just here that so many fail. It often means a very serious matter this renunciation of what is revealed as iniquity, involving changes in many realms of life, possibly touching the sphere of the affections or the possessions, the inner habits of life or the outward details of conduct; but it is a much more serious thing to continue a controversy with God and thus prevent the Holy Spirit possessing His own temple. It is an actual impossibility to receive the Holy Spirit while grasping anything that God has condemned. The hand of faith must be empty in order to receive.[1]

¶ The thinnest sheet of paper placed under the trolly of an electric car will stop the car, provided it is not punctured by the mechanical pressure. Cut a copper wire carrying an electric current, file the ends square, place a piece of writing paper between the ends and press them together: the current which was transmitting thousands of horse-power is stopped; it is incapable of passing through the insulating substance of the paper. No other agency for transmitting power can be stopped by such slight obstacles as electricity. A sheet of writing paper placed across a tube conveying compressed air would be instantly ruptured. It would take a wall of steel at least an inch thick to stand the pressure which is driving a 10,000 horse-power engine. A thin layer of dirt beneath the wheels of an electric car can prevent the current which propels the car from passing to the rails, and thus back to the power house. So sensitive is the Holy Spirit to sin in the heart of a believer that its presence there is a complete obstacle to the manifestation of His love and power.[2]

(1) *He is grieved by insincerity and falsehood, for He is the Spirit of truth.*—All that is against truth, all that is against justice and honesty, is hateful to Him. He is grieved at all falsehood, in word or in deed. How much is He grieved then at the insincerity of Christians towards one another, when we change our words towards our neighbours to their face and behind their back; when we speak them fair as long as they are before us, but have quite a different story when they are gone and cannot hear

[1] J. S. Holden, *The Spirit of Life*, 62.

[2] C. H. Tyndall, *Electricity and its Similitudes*, 78.

our opinion of them; when we make a show of friendship as long as we think they may be useful to us and do us good, but speak roughly as soon as we have nothing more to get from them. Surely there can be few greater griefs to the Spirit of truth and faithfulness than to see those whom He is striving to bring into the ways of truth so hollow in heart, so full of false professions, and unmeaning, untrue words.

¶ Among her many virtues, one thinks first of her sincerity. She gave to everybody an immediate sense of truth, such as we have when a sum comes right. She could not be disloyal or disingenuous; she had no use for any sort of trick or artifice; it was not in her to act or pose or rehearse effects.[1]

¶ "More and more," he said once, "I see that nothing is so necessary for the religious condition of the mind as absolute simplicity. We know what we have got to do, and the only thing is to ask ourselves whether we are doing it as well as we can."[2]

(2) *He is grieved by malice and unkindness, for He is the Spirit of love.*—How must it grieve Him to see how love is set at nought among Christian people. How must it grieve Him to see how little some people seem to think of cherishing malice and ill-will in their hearts, to see how hard a matter it is to get them to give up a quarrel and really forgive what they suppose is an injury. How must it grieve Him as He accompanies us through the day, watching our dangers, ever anxious to help our weakness, to hear the words of unkindness, of peevishness, of jealousy, which drop from our mouths as the hours wear on, and which we take no care to stop. How must He grieve at the uncharitable suspicions and surmises, at the obstinacy with which we try to put the worst appearance on things, and stretch them from the truth to make them seem as bad as possible.

¶ We have read of the old teacher Pythagoras, who had a school of rhetoric, dialectic, and general disputation. All the scholars in the school, we read, used to spring at one another, so to say, and in hot dispute chase the hours of the day; but their habit was, when the shadows gathered and the school was done, to fall upon each other and with a kiss of peace and brotherhood to close the intellectual fray.[3]

[1] Said of Mrs. Paget, in *Francis Paget, Bishop of Oxford*, 75.

[2] *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 224.

[3] J. Parker, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 126.

2. The great instrumentality of the Holy Ghost is conscience. There is a natural conscience in every heathen man, according to which he will be judged at the last day. In the Christian the conscience is more—it is the vehicle of the voice of the Holy Ghost. It needs, of course, to be instructed, or else it will be a morbid or false conscience. But the Spirit's seal is on the conscience. And to silence conscience is to grieve the Spirit. By resisting His warnings and whisperings in our consciences, by going contrary to what He puts into our hearts and makes us see to be right, by refusing to be led by Him when He shows us what we ought to do, we may show more and more that we do not belong to Him, that we do not wish for His help and guidance, that we prefer to walk alone, till at last, wearied out by our provocations and hardness of heart, He lets us have our way, and gives us up to the imaginations of our own hearts. That is what we are always in danger of whenever we grieve Him. That is what we must come to if we grieve Him too long, and presume too far on His patience.

¶ Dean Stanley recalls a well-known German picture representing a young man playing at chess with the Tempter of his soul. There he sits, intent upon the game; he sees only the moves of the pieces immediately before him; he thinks he will still win the game. Opposite to him sits the Fiend, exulting over an easy prey. Already piece after piece has been taken; here a good deed gone, there a prayer removed; a few more successful moves on the Tempter's part, and the game is won—and the soul is lost. But there is yet another figure in the picture, which gives to the scene at once a deeper pathos and also a ray of hope. Behind the young man, unseen by him, unnoticed by the Tempter, stands the Guardian Angel of his soul. The wings are already spread for flight: the face is already turning away. "It is a face not of anger, not of disappointment, not of despair, not of resistance, but of profound compassion and grief."

III.

The Great Motive for not Grieving the Spirit.

We stand in a bigh relationship to Him. We have been sealed in Him unto the day of redemption.

1. *In what does this sealing consist?*—The Apostle explains elsewhere. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." From which we learn that it is a "seal" which has, if one may so speak, two sides, which make two impressions, which together complete the spiritual "sealing." The one, God's electing grace—"The Lord knoweth them that are his"; and the other, our own personal progress in holiness—"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." And God's election, and our sanctification, the consequence of election, make the "seal."

That this is the "seal" of which the Apostle is speaking to the Ephesians is confirmed by the words that he adds—"unto the day of redemption"—implying that it then ceases. For, as soon as the redeemed soul takes its redeemed body, the danger will be all over; the Proprietor will be come back, and He will unseal the casket, and take out the jewel, because He wants it for His own crown.

¶ If we can learn aright how Christ was sealed, we shall learn how we are sealed. The sealing of Christ by the Father is the communication of the Holy Spirit in fulness to Him, authorizing Him unto and acting His Divine power in all the acts and duties of His office, so as to evidence the presence of God with Him and approbation of Him. God's sealing of believers then is His gracious communication of the Holy Spirit unto them so to act His divine power in them as to enable them unto all the duties of their holy calling, evidencing them to be accepted with Him both for themselves and others, and asserting their preservation unto eternal life.[1]

2. *The seal is the mark of ownership.*—When men put their mark upon an article, it is to show that it is their own. The farmer brands his tools that they may not be stolen. They are his. The shepherd marks his sheep that they may be recognized as belonging to his flock. So the Holy Spirit puts His mark of ownership upon the hearts of all His people. He seals us. "They shall be mine," saith the Lord of Hosts, "in the day that I make up my jewels." And then the Spirit puts God's seal upon us to signify that we are God's reserved inheritance—His peculiar people, the portion in which His soul delights.

[1] John Owen, *Discourse Concerning the Spirit.*

What is said here to be sealed is not any external promise or assurance, however rich, however infallible: it is the Christian himself, his own actual personality, that is the recipient of the sealing. And here, perhaps, we may be reminded that in the great discourse in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, our Lord, having to prove that He can give to His followers the food that endureth to eternal life, affirms that He Himself was "sealed" by the Father, that is, was solemnly declared by the Father to be the true Christ. Yet we may discern the idea of ownership as recurring, though less distinctly, in this passage also; for in the context our Lord asserts a special Sonship as inhering in Himself, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," as if the fundamental thought, in regard to the sealing connected with His Incarnate Person, were just this, that He was attested as God's own Son.

¶ "How hot it is!" cried a stick of sealing-wax. "It's positively exhausting. I can't stand much more of this!" And thereupon the poor thing began to bend and twist under the heat. But it grew hotter and hotter still, as a cruel hand kept it remorselessly in the flame of a candle. Then the wax began to melt, and portions dropped off on to a sheet of paper placed to receive them; and these were moulded into shape under pressure of a signet. "Really," said the sealing-wax, "I didn't know I could look so splendid. Just see this crest!" Adversity tends to the development of character. Fire makes the Divine crest beautiful. The marble of the Christian character gleams the whiter, the gold and silver and precious stones flash the brighter, the colours glow the more beautiful, because of the fierce lights of time. Reserved by Divine love and grace unto the day of redemption,

> The ills we see,
> The mysteries of sorrow deep and long,
> The dark enigmas of permitted wrong,
>
> Have all one key!
> This strange, sad world is but our Father's school,
> All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule.[1]

¶ In Eastern countries clay is sometimes used instead of wax for the purpose of sealing. The wax may melt, while the clay hardens by reason of the heat of the climate. In the Book of Job it is said, "It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a

[1] W. Burrows.

garment." Any impression made upon the clay will become more distinct as the sun's rays pour down and become fiercer. Some retire into monasteries and convents to find shelter; some retire into themselves. Let us be as well-seasoned clay, to derive shape and comeliness even from the world's fierce light, which beats upon the throne of our natures. Be as clay, and the writing upon the seal will come out the more clearly the more glaringly the world's suns and fires may shine and burn.[1]

3. *The seal indicates guardianship.*—A seal is used for preserving as well as for attesting. The Eastern seals up his money-bags to secure the gold within, and we seal our letters to guard the enclosure. A seal is set for security. Now, as the only way by which we can be known to be Christians is by really possessing the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost, so, also, the only way by which we can be kept as Christians, and preserved from going back to the world, is by still possessing that same Holy Spirit. What are we if the Spirit of God be gone? Salt that has lost its savour, wherewith can we be salted? "Trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots . . . wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." The Holy Spirit is to us not a luxury, but a necessity: we must have Him, or we die.

¶ Eastern locks could be opened with ease. Solomon has an allusion to this when he says, "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him" (Cant. v. 4, R.V.). A seal was placed over the door of the house where property was deposited. The Pharisees caused a watch to be set, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone. When Daniel was cast into the lions' den, "a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel" (Dan. vi. 17). Christians are sealed with God's own signet, that the Divine purposes of love and mercy may be fully established. As the blood was sprinkled upon the doorposts of the children of Israel to save from the destroying angel, so God marks His own with His own signet for security.[2]

¶ You have some valuable property—it may be gold or jewels—and you are going abroad for a season. Anxious for your precious things, you gather them carefully up, and you put on them your "seal," your name to the seal. The "seal" marks them yours while you are away, and secures them from being lost or stolen.

[1] W. Burrows. [2] *Ibid.*

So long as they are under the "seal," they cannot be removed or hurt; and you look to find them, in their sure keeping, when you come back. And your great Proprietor, who has spent so much on you, is gone away for a time. He has gone to a far country. But He is to return; and when He returns, His longing desire is to find you unharmed and beautiful, and still His own.[1]

¶ You watch a ship as it is being loaded for a voyage, and amongst other cargo you notice a number of boxes bearing a significant seal. These are not stowed away in the hold like consignments of common goods, but are taken to some place where they will be constantly watched by the responsible officers of the ship. The chests are chests of sealed treasure. Should the ship spring a leak and be endangered, after the safety of the passengers has been provided for, these sealed chests will be the first things to be put into the lifeboats. If pirates should succeed in boarding the vessel, the great fight will be round these sealed chests. Should the ship go down into the depths, these sealed chests will be the first things the divers will seek to bring back to the surface. The seal marks them out for special care and defence, and whatever human vigilance, foresight, and valour can do will be done to deliver them to the consignees. And so with that sealing of the Spirit affixed to sincere believers in Jesus Christ. They are subject to the same risks, vicissitudes, and temptations as other men; but all that God's power can do to help and deliver them shall be done, and when the final catastrophe of death shall come into the horizon and bury all things in a common desolation, these shall be the first to be brought back again from the depths of earth. This special sealing marks out body and soul alike for God's special possession and guardianship. His sealed servants shall never perish.[2]

4. *The seal lasts until the day of redemption.*—The term "redemption" is one of the broadest and most elastic in the New Testament vocabulary. A cursory glance will show us that it does not merely denote the ransom Christ once offered for our salvation, or even our experimental deliverance from the power of sin in the present life. The word covers the rescue of God's people from the last trace of sin's dominion in death and their elevation to share the glory of Jesus Christ on high. A similar comprehensiveness in the use of the word is to be found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul speaks in an

[1] James Vaughan. [2] T. G. Selby, *The Holy Spirit*, 98.

ascending series of "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." If redemption points chiefly to Christ's work on the cross, we should expect it to be put before righteousness and sanctification; but because it is the wider term, Paul puts it last, and makes it include not only rescue from the moral perversity bred into human character by sin, but from every pain, abasement, and physical debility that has followed in its train.

The seal is not to be broken until the proper authorities and witnesses are present, and all the purpose of such sealing has been answered. Christians are sealed unto the day of redemption, unto that day when redemption shall be perfected in glory. This sealing is both retrospective and prospective. It looks back to Calvary and onward to heaven. The day when the terms of our spiritual purchase were agreed to, when the Divine compact was settled, when the seal was affixed, was the day when the Saviour said, "It is finished." We come into part enjoyment of this redemption on earth. In heaven all the terms of the agreement will be fully manifested and enjoyed. "Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Whatever may be the trials and difficulties through which we have to pass, however much we may be tossed on the heaving ocean of life, let us not abate our courage or lose our heart, for we are reserved unto the day of redemption. Let us not think that we are the children of fate, the mere toys of blind circumstances, the playthings of tyrannical and unreasoning force; for we are reserved unto the day of redemption. Yes, God, the loving and all-wise God, has mysterious methods of reservation. He may reserve in poverty, in trial, in sickness drear, in sore bereavement, in heart anguish, in soul throbbings of fearful measure, when waves and billows toss and groan and sweep with fury. Still God reserves; and sometimes thus reserves that the crest on the seal may be all the brighter.

¶ When Daguerre was working at his sun pictures his great difficulty was to make them permanent. The light came and imprinted the image, but when the tablet was drawn from the camera, the image had vanished. He discovered, however, the chemical power which turned the evanescent into the permanent. And the day is coming when the image of Christ will be stamped so indelibly by the Spirit upon the mind of man that it can never fade.

¶ What is the one decisive sign by which we may know whether we have received the Holy Ghost? Is it to be a mere sentiment, an impression upon the mind, a religious hope; or is it to be something more decisive, emphatic, and incontrovertible? Do you ask a question? I am prepared with a reply. What is the one decisive sign that a man has received the Holy Ghost? Let me approach that question through two others. Have you received the poetic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by prose, but by poetry. Have you received the heroic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by cowardice, not by craven-heartedness, but by adventure, by freely encountering peril in all its thousand forms and possibilities of visitation. Have you received the Holy Spirit? The decisive sign is love of holiness—not power of theological debate, not only contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, not only outwardly irreproachable character, but love of holiness—not reputation, but reality; a heart that pants after the holiness of God—life concentrated into one burning prayer to be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit—life a sacrifice on God's altar—that is what I mean by saying that holiness is the one decisive test of our having received the Holy Ghost.[1]

Ah Lord, we all have pierced Thee: wilt Thou be
  Wroth with us all to slay us all?
Nay, Lord, be this thing far from Thee and me:
  By whom should we arise, for we are small,
By whom if not by Thee?

Lord, if of us who pierced Thee Thou spare one,
  Spare yet one more to love Thy Face,
And yet another of poor souls undone,
  Another, and another—God of grace,
Let mercy overrun.[2]

[1] Joseph Parker. [2] Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 137.

The Fruit of the Light.

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The Fruit of the Light.

For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.—Eph. v. 9.

This is one of the cases in which the Revised Version has done service by giving currency to an unmistakably accurate and improved reading. That which stands in our Authorized Version, "the fruit of the Spirit," seems to have been a correction made by some one who took offence at the violent metaphor, as he conceived it, that "light" should bear "fruit," and desired to tinker the text so as to bring it into verbal correspondence with another passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, where "the fruits of the Spirit" are enumerated. But the reading "the fruit of the *light*" has not only the preponderance of manuscript authority in its favour, but is also preferable because it preserves a striking image, and is in harmony with the whole context.

The Apostle has just been exhorting his Ephesian friends to walk as "children of light," and before he goes on to expand and explain that injunction he interjects this parenthetical remark, as if he would say, To be true to the light that is in you is the sum of duty, and the condition of perfectness, "*for* the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." That connexion is entirely destroyed by the substitution of "Spirit." The whole context, both before and after the text, is full of references to the light as working in the life; and two verses after it we read about "the unfruitful works of darkness," an expression which evidently looks back to the text.

Calvin showed his judgment and independence in preferring this reading to that of the received Greek text; similarly Bengel, and most of the later critics. The sentence is parenthetical, and contains a singular and instructive figure. It is one of those sparks from the anvil in which great writers not infrequently give us

their finest utterances—sentences that get a peculiar point from the eagerness with which they are struck off in the heat and clash of thought, as the mind reaches forward to some thought lying beyond. The clause is an epitome, in five words, of Christian virtue, whose qualities, origin and method are all defined. It sums up exquisitely the moral teaching of the Epistle. Gal. v. 22, 23 ("the fruit of the Spirit") and Phil. iv. 8 ("Whatsoever things are true," etc.) are parallel to this passage, as Pauline definitions, equally perfect, of the virtues of a Christian man. This has the advantage of the others in brevity and epigrammatic point.

¶ Great Christian teachers have spoken of the virtues of the heathen as "splendid sins." But Christ and His Apostles never said so. He said: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." And they said: "In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The Christian creed has no jealousy in regard to human excellence. Whatsoever things are true and honourable and just and pure, wherever and in whomsoever they are found, our faith honours and delights in them, and accepts them to the utmost of their worth. But then it claims them all for its own—as the fruit of the one "true light which lighteth every man." Wherever this fruit appears, we know that that light has been, though its ways are past finding out. Through secret crevices, by subtle refractions and multiplied reflections, the true light reaches many a life lying far outside its visible course.[1]

I.

The Fruit-producing Light.

1. In the context the Apostle has been speaking of "light"; here he boldly says, "the light," and the change of expression is not accidental. He wishes to point to some specific source from which all light flows. And this is quite clear from the expression "Now are ye light in the Lord"—a phrase which implies that the light which he has in view is not natural to men, but is the result of the entrance into their darkness of a new element. The words evidently imply that the light which blesses and hallows humanity is no diffused glow, but is all gathered and concentrated into one blazing centre, from which it floods the hearts of men. Or, to put

[1] G. G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 324.

away the metaphor, he is here asserting that the only way by which any man can cease to be, in the doleful depths of his nature, darkness in its saddest sense, is by opening his heart through faith, that into it there may rush, as the light ever does where an opening—be it only a single tiny cranny—is made, the light which is Christ, and without whom is darkness.

¶ How terrible is the thought of blind darkness, and most of all to a painter, who truly sees; whereas most men are purblind, while they think they see the glories of this marvellous world. But worse infinitely is the blindness of man's spirit, often wilfully barring out every avenue by which Light might enter. That word I know by experience is true. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth Light"; and those who glory in their acquaintance with the discoveries of modern Science, and in Literature, Art, Music, and every sensuous pleasure, are feeding on husks, like the Prodigal, if their souls are estranged from God our Father and from the True Light of man, Jesus Christ.[1]

¶ Jesus was the Light of the world, the Revealer of the Father, and, as the Revealer, the Giver of life to men. As the Light, He imparts new possibilities of life to those who otherwise were hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins. The Light of Christ enters the heart; and what is the result? Productiveness of a high and spiritual order in the life that is thus begotten and sustained: all that such a life brings forth is the fruit of that light. No man can keep that light to himself. The ordinary figure of the lamp placed upon the lampstand is a striking one. You do not put it under a bushel but on a lampstand. But that is not the only way in which light shows itself; you light a candle and it shines forth. But God lights a grain of corn and it grows up into a stalk, and develops an ear, and full corn in the ear; it is the light He has given to that grain of corn that results in its growth and in its development, and the ear of corn is the outshining of that light with which God's sunshine has permeated that grain. As God causes His sun to shine upon every field which bears in it the seed that has been sown by the farmer, He is sowing light into that field so that the seed itself shall manifest that light which it has received in the development and multiplication of its own life, and in the warm glow which imparts wealth and glory to every harvest field. And so in the human heart, when the light of God through Jesus Christ enters it, there is a growth. You cannot conceal that light, it will show itself in fruits of light.[2]

[1] *Life and Letters of Frederic Shields*, 344.

[2] D. Davies, *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, vi. 378.

¶ When Christ enters any human heart, he bears with Him a twofold light: first, the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace, the hope of salvation. In Holman Hunt's picture, "The Light of the World," the lantern, carried in Christ's left hand, is this light of conscience. Its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, on the weeds which encumber it, and on an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard, thus marking that the entire awakening of the conscience is not merely to committed but to hereditary guilt. The light is suspended by a chain, wrapt about the wrist of the figure, showing that the light which reveals sin appears to the sinner also to chain the hand of Christ. The light which proceeds from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and, though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into the glow of it, the forms of the leaves and boughs, which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light, where its sphere extends.[1]

2. The light is antecedent to the fruit. Christ first, conduct second. To begin with what should be second is an anachronism in morals, and will be sure to result in failure in practice. He is not a wise man who tries to build a house from the chimneys downwards. And to talk about making a man's doings good before you have secured a radical change in the doer, by the infusion into him of the very life of Jesus Christ Himself, is to begin at the top story, instead of at the foundation. Many of us are trying to put the cart before the horse in that fashion. The people who, apart from Jesus Christ, and the entrance into their souls by faith of His quickening power, are seeking, some of them nobly, some of them sadly, and all of them vainly, to cure their faults of character, will never attain anything but a superficial and fragmentary goodness, because they have begun at the wrong end.

¶ Light is the most essential condition of fruitfulness. Without light no vegetable or animal growth reaches perfection of colour or development. Rob the plant of its light, and you blanch it; rob any creature of the light, and you take out of him all colour and stamina. Any gardener will tell you that he may have all the heat that is necessary for an aromatic plant, and that shall enable it to blossom and put on a beautiful garment, so that

[1] Ruskin, "Arrows of the Chace" (*Works*, xii. 329).

it shall resemble the luxuriance with which it grows in its natural soil and under its native skies; but that when he has done all, when he has got his thermometer up into any temperature he chooses, there is little or no aromatic secretion. That in which the plant excels, that in which it finds its final meaning, is absent. To all appearance it is very much the same plant as in its native soil and light, and yet there is an all-important difference. Under these conditions it is not the fruit of light. It has heat, but light is something more than heat; and that is what is often wanting under this leaden sky of ours. As it is to be found in tropical regions, it is wanting in the most beautiful and perfect conservatory or hot-house that has ever been erected here. If men could only make a sun that should shine brightly through all our gloom—or, rather, if men could only rid themselves of the clouds that intercept the light of the sun that shines in fairer skies in the distant East—it would be all very well; but they cannot, and thus sunlight is wanting in sufficient quantities to ripen aromatic shrubs here, and nothing can compensate for that lack. All the artificial warmth that you can get fails to produce the same results.[1]

¶ Our definitions of a good man are as varied as the standpoints from which we look at him. We judge his goodness by his kindness, or honesty or veracity or purity or sobriety or some other minor morality for which he may be distinguished. And in our generous moods and magnanimous moments, when we want to exemplify the fine breadth of spirit by which all our thoughts are animated, we say, "He is not a Christian, but he is a good man!" Is he? If, as is the case, "God" and "good" come from the same root, should not the test go a step further back? Is he a God-man? God-man and good man should mean one and the same. And in so far as the virtues which the man possesses and exercises are God-like and God-inspired, every good man is a God-man—a man in whom God strives and struggles.[2]

¶ The good man is not alone. Touch him, and you touch God. Help him, and your help is taken as if it were rendered to God Himself. This may give us an idea of the sublime life to which we are called—we live, and move, and have our being in God; we are temples, our life is an expression of Divine influence; in our voice there is an undertone of Divinity.[3]

3. Light has a wonderful vivifying power. It gives life and vigour. In the Arctic regions there are whole months during

[1] D. Davies, *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, vi. 376.
[2] R. Cynon Lewis, in *Sermons by Welshmen*, 298. [3] Joseph Parker.

which the sun never rises, and if you want to know how valuable light is, you have just to think of the great difference between what you would see if you were there, and what you see around you in this land. If you go far enough north you find constant ice and snow; there are no beautiful flowers and fruits, no green grass to please the eye, no colours of any kind to gaze upon, but only an endless white winding sheet that seems to wrap up the dead earth. You have a barren wilderness in which, if you sought to dwell, you would be sure to die of cold and starvation. Contrast with all this the fields and the trees, and the hedges amongst which you live here, the bright blossoms that are in some of our gardens, and the sweet fruits that come in the autumn, and the sheaves that are gathered in the harvest time. What is the reason of this great difference? It is light. We get the light every day of the year, and it comes down to us in a more direct way than that in which it falls in the Arctic circle, so that we get more of its benefits.[1]

¶ You may remember the beautiful lines in which Oliver Goldsmith depicts the heavenly spirit which the village pastor was able to maintain—

> As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

So is it with the Christian disciple who through all the checkered scenes of his daily life walks in the light with God. The light of heaven in his heart shines out in his face, and surrounds him with a glory which is not the less real that earthly eyes cannot see it, as earthly trials cannot cause it for one moment to pale.[2]

¶ Birds are very fond of catching the last evening rays of a winter's sun, and are always to be found in the afternoon on banks facing the west, or swinging, if there is no wind, on the topmost branch of the small fir-tree. On the mountains, too, all birds, as the sun gets low, take to the slopes that face the west; whilst in the morning they betake themselves to the eastern banks and slopes that meet his rays. No bird is to be found in the shade during winter, unless it has flown there for shelter from some imminent danger. This is very remarkable in the case of the

[1] J. Aitchison, *A Bag with Holes*, 105.
[2] J. P. Lilley, *The Pathway of Light*, 63.

golden plovers, who in the evening ascend from slope to slope, as each becomes shaded by the intervening heights, until they are all collected on the very last ridge which the sun shines upon.[1]

Grant us Thy light, that we may learn
How dead is life from Thee apart;
How sure is joy for all who turn
To Thee an undivided heart.
Grant us Thy light, when, soon or late,
All earthly scenes shall pass away,
In Thee to find the open gate
To deathless home and endless day.[2]

4. We must welcome the light and bask in it. "You are light in the Lord," the Apostle said; "walk as children of the light." But his readers might ask: "What does this mean? It is poetry: let us have it translated into plain prose. How shall we walk as children of the light? Show us the path." "I will tell you," the Apostle answers—"the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Walk in these ways; let your life bear this fruit; and you will be true children of the light of God. So living, you will find out what it is that pleases God, and how joyful a thing it is to please Him (ver. 10). Your life will then be free from all complicity with the works of darkness. It will shine with a brightness, clear and penetrating, that will put to shame the works of darkness and transform the darkness itself. It will speak with a voice that all must hear, bidding them awake from the sleep of sin to see in Christ their light of life."

¶ How eagerly the sunflower turns to the sun! When the sun sets, and night falls, it folds up its leaves. But when the morning light comes once more, it opens up its bosom to its sweet, soft touch. Nor is this all; it keeps inclining towards the sun all day, following its course through the sky.

¶ Florence Nightingale tells, in her *Notes on Nursing*, how the patients in the hospitals turn towards the light. The light is life-giving, health-giving. It seems to draw the sufferers to itself.[3]

¶ My purpose in writing to-day is to narrate a little and homely incident which occurred last night, and which touched me

[1] J. A. St. John, *A Tour in Sutherlandshire.* [2] L. Tuttiett.
[3] A. G. Fleming, *Silver Wings*, 77.

not a little, leaving you to draw the moral. Taking a "constitutional" before dinner in a drenching rain, I came up with a humble working man to whom I wished a "good evening." The man walked alongside of me and began to talk, telling me the landlady of the house where he lived had died some little time ago. "That, my friend," I said, "is a road we must all go." "Yes," he said, "all but those who shall be alive on the earth when He comes again." The word interested me, and I replied, "I am glad to hear you speaking in that way." We talked a little amid the pelting rain about Christ's second coming, when he remarked, "Blessed are they who hear the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance!" I noticed a strange, bright, happy light about the man's homely face, which struck me; and I said, "You seem to be rejoicing in that joyful sound of the Gospel?" "Yes," he said, "I am very happy, for I am trusting in my Saviour and humbly trying to serve Him. But some time ago," he went on to say, "it was very different. For months and months I was in the most dreadful misery, believing myself a lost man for whom there was no mercy. I could get no peace night nor day. But one Sunday I happened to go into Saltcoats Parish Church, and something that the minister said—it was nothing very particular—came home as true. 'That's true,' I said, 'that's true. I see that Christ is a Saviour.' From that moment I trusted Him. I am trusting Him still, and with His grace I will to the end. Life is now all changed to me, and I am the very happiest of men. No doubt many a temptation came to me to go back to the old life. But He kept by me and brought me out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock. And there I hope to remain for ever."

He then went on to say that no sooner had he found this new joy than he said to himself: "I must try to do something for Him who has done so much for me." And casting about for something to do, he remembered an old friend who had gone very far astray through drink, and was then lying on a sick-bed, and hinting about ending himself. He said he stuck to that man for days and nights till God honoured him in being the instrument of effecting a great change, and, like himself, he is now a humble and earnest Christian. I asked him how he had dealt with him. "I just tell't him," he said, with a happy smile, "to look to Christ, to follow Christ, to trust in Christ." We shook hands together as we parted, mutually commending each other to God, and I ate my dinner with a happy heart. God be with you, dear Lady Frances, and give you all joy and peace in believing.[1]

[1] *Life of Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthberts*, 289.

As the branch abides in the vine,
Through seasons delayed or long,
Till its clusters of purple shine
And the vintage echoes with song;
As tendril and leaf and flower
Partake the life of the tree,
And further its use and power,
In bondage of growth made free—
So, Lord, till life's ultimate hour,
My soul would abide in Thee!

As the ripples move with the tide,
Far over the world-wide deep,
And, in union naught may divide,
One rhythm and purpose keep;
As the lightest eddies of foam
Are held in that vast decree,
And never a wave may roam—
So, Maker of shore and sea,
Desiring no lovelier home,
My spirit would move in Thee!

As fragrance grows in the rose,
Of petal and bloom a part,
A mystery no man knows
Enwrought in its innermost heart—
So, through unsearchable love,
A wave at one with Thy sea,
A branch Thine hand can approve,
A sweetness enshrined yet free,
My God, I would live and move
And have my being in Thee![1]

II.

The Varieties of Fruit which the Light Produces.

"In all goodness and righteousness and truth." In Christ's garden there forms in clustered beauty and perfectness the ripe growth of virtue, which in the sunshine of His love and under the freshening breath of His Spirit sends forth its spices and "yieldeth its fruit every month." In it there abide *goodness*,

[1] Mary R. Jarvis.

righteousness, truth—these three; and who shall say which of them is greatest?

In St. Paul's letter to the Galatians the fruit is divided into nine varieties, whereas in his letter to the Ephesians it is divided into three only. In the former the varieties are, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; in the latter they are "goodness, righteousness, and truth." The former are more or less specific, the latter generic. In the Galatian list he is thinking of several Christian graces in detail; in the Ephesian list he brings out a few great outstanding graces which are inclusive of many more. But the geometrical axiom that the whole is greater than its parts and includes them does not cover the ground. We dare not limit the elements that go to the making of a Christian character to nine or nineteen, for the sweetest graces referred to elsewhere by the Apostle are omitted from both lists. Faith and love are in the chorus, but hope is not; peace and joy are in, but patience is not; and no spiritual chorus can be complete, or is destined to create the most perfect harmony by the due proportion of parts, which leaves out such seraphic songsters as Hope and Patience, to say nothing of other graces omitted, whose presence always makes music. St. Paul formed his chorus of graces on the Galatian scale some years before he wrote to the Ephesians, and so to omit none now, he writes "for the fruit of the light is in *all* goodness and righteousness and truth." No grace is left out here, for the fruit grows and ripens in every garden of goodness—the melody of the Spirit is heard in every righteous ring of the honest heart, and the harmony is like the harmony of heaven without a single discord when truth is added.

The different kinds of fruit are not to be separated, but should grow on the one stem, should blend in the one character. So many of us are good on one side and not on another. One side of our life is sweet, while another side is sour. Or we have pity, but no hope; we have tears, but no laughter. We are one-sided, lop-sided, and acceptable fruit cannot be found on every branch. When we live clear out in the light of Christ, the genial heat and radiance will make every part fruitful, and on every side men will see the bounties of the Spirit.

Goodness is the adjustment of our relations to God, righteous-

ness the adjustment of our relations to man, truth the adjustment of our relations to self. Goodness makes me worship, righteousness makes me act, truth makes me think. Goodness makes me look up, righteousness makes me look out, truth makes me look in. Goodness makes me see God, righteousness makes me see others, truth makes me see self. Goodness gives me a vision of the world above me, righteousness gives me a vision of the world without me, truth gives me a vision of the world within me. Truth is thus the man at the wheel, directing the ship, and bringing it safely to its haven.

¶ As seen through the prism on which the rays of the sun fall, the "fruit of the light" is in all red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These are loosely the primary colours, but strictly they are only three—red, yellow, and blue. These are the principal colours that we see tremble on the rainbow across the sky, but these primary colours are split up into many more as we watch them in their infinite variety in foliage and flower. And so the fruit of the inward light which is the result of a Spirit-filled soul, is in all goodness and righteousness and truth—the primary colours of the Kingdom, which divide themselves again into all the graces of the Christian life.[1]

> For as a stone, so Sufi legends run,
> Wooed by unwearied patience of the sun
> Piercing its dense opacity, has grown
> From a mere pebble to a precious stone,
> Its flintiness impermeable and crass
> Turned crystalline to let the sunlight pass;
> So hearts long years impassive and opaque,
> Whom terror could not crush nor sorrow break,
> Yielding at last to love's refining ray
> Transforming and transmuting, day by day,
> From dull grown clear, from earthly grown divine,
> Flash back to God the light that made them shine.[2]

1. *In all goodness.*—Goodness seems to be used here in its narrower sense, just as the same Apostle uses it in the Epistle to the Romans in contrast with "righteousness," where he says, "for a good man some would even dare to die." There he means by "good," as he does here by "goodness," not the general expression

[1] R. Cynon Lewis, in *Sermons by Welshmen*, 297.
[2] Jalaluddin Rumi, in *A Little Book of Eastern Wisdom*, 57.

for all forms of virtue and gracious conduct, but the specific excellence of kindliness, amiability, or the like. "Righteousness," again, is that which rigidly adheres to the strict law of duty, and carefully desires to give every man what belongs to him, and to every relation of life what it requires. And "truth" is rather the truth of sincerity as opposed to hypocrisy and lies and shams than the intellectual truth as opposed to error.

(1) Christian goodness is the sanctification of the heart and its affections, renewed and governed by the love of God in Christ. It is, notwithstanding, seldom inculcated in the New Testament; because it is referred to its spring and principle in *love*. Goodness is love embodied. Now love, as the Christian knows it, is of God. "We love," says the Apostle John, "because he first loved us. . . . He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is the faith that makes good men—the best the world has ever known, the best that it holds now. Vanity, selfishness, evil temper and desire are shamed and burnt out of the soul by the holy fire of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. In the warm, tender light of the cross the heart is softened and cleansed, and expanded to the widest charity. It becomes the home of all generous instincts and pure affections. So "the fruit of the light is in all goodness."

¶ Mr. Watts painted his Miltonic Satan with the face averted from the light of the Creator with whom he talked.[1]

¶ The soul of goodness is love; for it is out of love that goodness issues, and it is in love that goodness culminates. There are other motives which incite to goodness, but they aid and foster, they do not create it. Without love there may be good actions, but there cannot be goodness; as a quality, goodness must be rooted in love. Most men are still so far from a true conception of love that they suspect it of certain inherent possibilities of weakness, and strive to steady and invigorate it by bringing to its aid the ideas of law and duty; not discerning that love carries in its heart a law far more searching and inexorable than any that was ever graven on tables of stone or written in statute-books, and that duty, in the sense of obligation to serve, is its daily life. The severity of Christ, the teacher of love, is more terrible than that of the sternest Old Testament lawgiver, because the test He applies not only tries conduct but searches motive. The law is satisfied when restoration is made or the penalty paid; it cannot go further. But to love, which searches the heart as with a lighted

[1] M. S. Watts, *George Frederic Watts*, i. 97.

torch, these are only the external signs of repentance; it cannot rest short of a complete cleansing of the spirit. With a severity born of a passionate determination to make the best in every man supreme, it will accept nothing less than final and lasting purification.

No quality of the infinite love is more Divine than its ability to bear and to impose suffering; it would rather the loved one were slain than dishonoured; rather he were tortured than stained. In Mr. Watts's beautiful picture of "Love and Life" Love is leading Life up the steep pathway, over the stones that bruise and pierce, with infinite gentleness but with inexorable purpose. For love can lead where law cannot drive, and love can win where law is powerless to force obedience. For love has resources with which law is not armed; it has the fellowship of burden-bearing and suffering. It asks no one to go where it is not ready to go itself. By its very nature it takes in the experience of one whom it strives to reclaim or correct, and in the anguish of the repentance which it compels it often sweats great drops of blood. Law declares the guilt of the world and imposes its penalty; love carries the consciousness of that guilt home to the deepest nature, compels not only the forsaking of the sin, but the re-birth, with all its pangs, of the soul of the sinner, and walks step by step through the humiliation and bitterness of repentance, restitution, and recovery. It shares the shame and anguish long after the law has run its course and is satisfied. It compels the guilty to confess and restore with an inexorableness more terrible than that of law itself; but it does not leave the offender in the dark; it goes to prison with him, wears the garb and does the work of punishment with him; and when he has cleansed himself, welcomes him back to life and duty when all faces are turned away.[1]

¶ It is the blending of purity with gentleness that makes "goodness." A good man is something more than a strictly righteous man or a strictly just man. There is a gentleness and grace to add a charm to what might otherwise be repellent in the strength and vigour of his convictions and life. A good man is a man who has strong convictions, and who, having them, has also graces that impart a beauty to them. The earth has a backbone of granite rock, but it does not project its granite rock in every spot of charming landscape. There, as a rule, it shows its gentleness and grace; and even when by mighty upheavals or convulsions it shows here and there its rocky ribs, it clothes them with some "half tone" of moss or lichen or foliage. So that, associated with the most rugged force, there is a gentle grace and

[1] H. W. Mabie, *The Life of the Spirit*, 133.

beauty. It is only when we try the strength of the earth that we find the strength of backbone it has. And so in the case of the typical good man. Such are his gentleness and grace that it is only when men try the strength of his principles that they find the granite rock under all. The good man is the gentle man—gentle in the gentleness, and strong in the strength, of Christ.[1]

¶ I must, from time to time, remind you of what I have often recommended to you, and of what you cannot attend to too much: *sacrifice to the Graces.* The different effects of the same things, said or done, when accompanied or abandoned by them, is almost inconceivable. They prepare the way to the heart; and the heart has such an influence over the understanding that it is worth while to engage it in our interest. It is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else; and it has so much to say even with men, and the ablest men too, that it commonly triumphs in every struggle with the understanding.[2]

(2) "In all goodness"—goodness of every variety. The piety of one man is deep and silent like the broad winding river which carries peace and plenty to the country through which it passes; the piety of another is strong and demonstrative like the wind which drives the ship from one continent to the other with its weight of wealth and commerce; the piety of the third is modest and retiring like the violet which flourishes best in the shade, but whose fragrance is never hidden. And yet they are all the fruit of the light. The piety of Peter is the piety which is active, energetic, impulsive, impetuous, rushing down the hill like an Alpine torrent, or over the precipice like a mighty cataract. The piety of John and Mary is the piety of the meditative mystics, who lay the head on the Master's breast to listen to the pulsations of His heart, or who sit at His feet to drink in His message and to catch every breeze that blows from the throne. The piety of the publican is the piety that dares not look up to heaven, and yet grows one of the sweetest fruits in the garden of God—humility. "The fruit of the light is in all goodness"—in the type that says nothing, and in the type that says everything, in the type that works, and in the type that waits.

¶ A great many mistakes are made about amiability. A man may be amiable simply through mere want of interest or force; he

[1] D. Davies, *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, vi. 379.
[2] Lord Chesterfield, *Letters to his Son*, i. 326.

may be so constituted that he really does not much care who is who or what is what. He may have a senile grin—call it a smile if you please—for anybody and for all persons alike,—a nice old man who never says a cross word, and never has a frown upon his face. That is not amiability. Here is a man who is naturally unamiable; he looks with a discriminating eye upon man and things; he is very passionate, fiery, self-asserting. Yet, by the grace of God, he is kept back; at times he shakes in the leash; he often seems as if he would break it and be away! Yet God's hold upon him is such that he speaks gentle words, restrains terms of indignation and wrath, moderates his rising passion. There—though he cannot look very amiable, though he may have a grim face—is the amiable man.[1]

¶ "He went about doing good." So we might say in our own age of two or three who have been personally known to us, "He or she went about doing good." They are the living witnesses to us of His work. If we observe them we shall see that they did good because they were good—because they lived for others and not for themselves, because they had a higher standard of truth, and therefore men could trust them, because their love was deeper, and therefore they drew others after them. These are they of whom we read in Scripture that they bear the image of Christ until His coming again, and of a few of them that they have borne the image of His sufferings, and to us they are the best interpreters of His life. They too have a hidden strength which is derived from communion with the Unseen; they pass their lives in the service of God, and yet only desire to be thought unprofitable servants. Their way of life has been simple—they have not had much to do with the world. They may have been scarcely known, or not known until after their death; they may have had their trials too—failing health, declining years, the ingratitude of men—but they have endured as seeing Him who is invisible.[2]

2. This fruit is *in all righteousness*.—The principle of righteousness, fully understood, includes everything in moral worth, and is often used to denote in one word the entire fruit of God's grace in man. For righteousness is the sanctification of the conscience. It is loyalty to God's holy and perfect law. It is no mere outward keeping of formal rules, such as the legal righteousness of Judaism, no submission to necessity or calculation of advantages; it is a love of the law in a man's inmost spirit; it is the quality of a heart one with that law, reconciled to it as it is reconciled to God

[1] Joseph Parker. [2] Benjamin Jowett.

Himself in Jesus Christ. At the bottom, therefore, righteousness and goodness are one. Each is the counterface and complement of the other. Righteousness is to goodness as the strong backbone of principle, the firm hand and the vigorous grasp of duty, the steadfast foot that plants itself on the eternal ground of the right and true and stands against a world's assault. Goodness without righteousness is a weak and fitful sentiment: righteousness without goodness is a dead formality. He cannot love God or his neighbour truly who does not love God's law; and he knows nothing aright of that law who does not know that it is the law of love.

¶ There is nothing so terrible as the insistence of love on perfect righteousness. It cannot compromise; it is powerless to accept anything less, because it has a consuming desire to bring out the final touch of nobleness in the soul it loves. They have not known the divinest secret of love who have not suffered from its inflexible idealism, its inexorable determination to get the best and the most out of the loved one. Many a husband has rebelled in feeling against his wife's faithful loyalty to his own noblest nature, and has come at last, in the clearer vision of his own growth, to reverence that insistence upon the best in aim, conduct, and habit as the very highest form of tenderness. It is not easy to live under the same roof with the ideal of what one ought to be and to do; but there comes a time, in such companionship, when the very roof is sacred because it has sheltered it. One must be good indeed before one can live at ease with a great love. For this reason Calvary is more awful than Sinai, and the patient sufferings of Christ more appalling than all the thunderings of the lawgivers. For love is not only all tenderness, forgiveness, and service; it is also all severity, sanity, duty, righteousness. It is far stronger and safer than law, because it is far more searching and inexorable.[1]

¶ The rule of right, the symmetries of character, the requirements of perfection, are no provincialisms of this planet; they are known among the stars; they reign beyond Orion and the Southern Cross; they are wherever the universal Spirit is; and no subject mind, though it fly on one track for ever, can escape beyond their bounds. Just as the arrival of light from deeps that extinguish parallax bears witness to the same ether there that vibrates here, and its spectrum reports that one chemistry spans the interval, so does the law of righteousness spring from its earthly base and embrace the empire of the heavens the

[1] H. W. Mabie, *The Life of the Spirit*, 136.

moment it becomes a communion between the heart of man and the life of God.[1]

¶ One morning I walked with a friend out of the city of Geneva to where the waters of the lake flow with swift rush into the Rhone. And we were both greatly interested in the strange sight which has impressed so many travellers. There are two rivers whose waters come together here, the Rhone and the Arve, the Arve flowing into the Rhone. The waters of the Rhone are beautifully clear and sparkling. The waters of the Arve come through a clayey soil and are muddy, grey, and dull. And for a long distance the two waters are wholly distinct. Two rivers of water are in one river-bed, on one side the sparkling blue Rhone water, on the other the dull grey Arve water, and the line between the two is sharply defined. And so it continues for a long distance. Then gradually they blend and the grey begins to tinge all through the blue. I went to the guide-book and maps to find out something about this river that kept on its way undefiled by its neighbour for so long. Its source is in a glacier that is between ten thousand and eleven thousand feet high, descending "from the gates of eternal night, at the foot of the pillar of the sun." It is fed continually by the melting glacier which, in turn, is being kept up by the snows and cold. Rising at this great height, ever being renewed steadily by the glacier, it comes rushing down the swift descent of the Swiss Alps through the lake of Geneva and on. There is the secret of purity, side by side with its dirty neighbour.

Our lives must have their source high up in the mountains of God, fed by a ceaseless supply. Only so can there be the purity and the momentum that shall keep us pure, and keep us *moving* down in contact with men of the earth. And we must keep closer to the source than is the Rhone at Geneva, else the streams flowing alongside will unduly influence us. Constant personal contact with Jesus is the beginning ever new of service.[2]

King of mercy, King of love,
In whom I live, in whom I move,
Perfect what Thou hast begun,
Let no night put out this sun;
Grant I may, my chief desire,
Long for Thee, to Thee aspire!
Let my youth, my bloom of days
Buy my comfort, and Thy praise;

[1] J. Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, i. 26.
[2] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Service*, 30.

That hereafter, when I look
O'er the sullied, sinful book,
I may find Thy hand therein
Wiping out my shame and sin!
O it is Thy only art
To reduce a stubborn heart;
And since Thine is victory,
Strongholds should belong to Thee;
Lord, then take it, leave it not
Unto my dispose or lot;
But since I would not have it mine,
O my God, let it be Thine.[1]

3. *In all truth.*—Truth comes last, for it signifies the inward reality and depth of the other two. Truth does not mean veracity alone, the mere truth of the lips. Heathen honesty goes as far as this. Men of the world expect as much from each other, and brand the liar with their contempt. Truth of words requires a reality behind itself. The acted falsehood is excluded, the hinted and intended lie no less than that expressly uttered. Beyond all this, it is the truth of the man that God requires—speech, action, thought, all consistent, harmonious and transparent, with the light of God's truth shining through them. Truth is the harmony of the inward and the outward—the correspondence of what the man is in himself with that which he appears and wishes to appear to be.

¶ Like you, I am most interested in the progress of art, and believe it can only be great by being true; but I am inclined to give truth a wider range, and I cannot help fearing you may become near-sighted. That I feel with you with regard to earnestness and truth in painting must be evident from my agreeing with you in admiration of certain productions; but I do not agree with you in your estimation of truth, or rather your view of truth. It appears to me that you confound it too much with detail, and overlook properties; and that in your appreciation of an endeavour to imitate exactly, you prefer the introduction of what is extraneous, to the leaving out of anything that may be in existence. Beauty is truth, but it is not always reality. In perceiving and appreciating with wonderful acuteness quality and truth of accident, you run some risk of overlooking larger truth of fundamental properties. In fact you are

[1] Henry Vaughan.

rather inclined to consider truth as a bundle of parts, than truth as a great whole.[1]

¶ Imagination has pictured to itself a domain in which every one who enters should be compelled to speak only what he thought, and pleased itself by calling such domain the Palace of Truth. A palace of veracity, if you will; but no temple of the truth. A place where each one would be at liberty to utter his own crude unrealities, to bring forth his delusions, mistakes, half-formed, hasty judgments; where the depraved ear would reckon discord harmony, and the depraved eye mistake colour; the depraved moral taste take Herod or Tiberius for a king, and shout beneath the Redeemer's cross, "Himself he cannot save!" A temple of the truth? Nay, only a palace echoing with veracious falsehoods, a Babel of confused sounds, in which egotism would rival egotism, and truth would be each man's own lie.[2]

¶ The part of public agitation which she least liked was its unfairness. She could detest a thing wholeheartedly, but she never could misrepresent it, and partisanship—including Labour partisanship—she would not even excuse. Sentiment of the gushing type she mistrusted, and it found no place in her appeals. Rigidity in truthfulness was one of her fundamental characteristics. "Error is the only fruit of error," she once said when some one urged that in dealing with the crowd one had to practise some deceptions. "If the road ahead is difficult, say so; if the pilgrimage is drudgery, discipline your people so that they may be able to go through it." Consequently, if she held to her views with unbending decision she was always tolerant and always anxious to meet the other side.[3]

Let me find thy road whilst my strength holds out.
  Thy rest when my strength has failed,
First the weary search, and the misty doubt,
  Then Truth with her face unveiled.

In the dim pine-woods I have known her near
  By the flash of her dear white feet
Down the quiet glades, where the soul can hear
  A song that is passing sweet.

For the ears that hear and the hearts that dare
  Her ageless song she sings;
For her listening ones she has filled the air
  With the tumult of her wings.[4]

[1] *George Frederic Watts*, i. 92. [2] F. W. Robertson.
[3] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 198.
[4] P. C. Ainsworth, *Poems and Sonnets*, 51.

The Purchase of Opportunity.

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The Purchase of Opportunity.

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.—Eph. v. 16.

1. These words stand at the end of a series of moral counsels and warnings, of which it is difficult to exaggerate the urgency and solemnity. St. Paul has painted in vivid colours the contrast between the corruptions of society and the holy living of genuine discipleship; he has implored the Ephesians to remember that such holy living is the condition of any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God; he has proved the necessity of carefulness in the religious life, and now he proceeds yet one step further. Carefulness must be directed by wisdom, lest the fears of conscience and the discipline of conduct be wrongly directed, and therefore wasted. "Take heed therefore how ye walk exactly," for this is the true sense of the original. The Ephesians are to be wise in their self-discipline, taking heed that the strictness of their walk is directed by right motives to right ends. "Take heed therefore how ye walk exactly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time," or rather, "buying up the opportunity, because the days are evil."

¶ The expression is found in Daniel ii. 8, and is perhaps borrowed from the Old Testament by St. Paul. Nebuchadnezzar complains that the astrologers are buying the time for themselves with a view to wasting it in vain delays: St. Paul bids Christians buy the time for themselves, at whatever cost, in order to use it in wise action. Seneca has a similar saying: "Gather up and preserve the time."

2. The picture or parable suggested by the text is this. Standing in the market-place is a wise and wary merchantman, keen for spiritual traffic and gain. Like Milton, he has fallen on evil times—on *bad* times, as men of business would say. The days drag slowly by, bringing him few means of moral culture, rare

occasions on which he can trade with his talents and make them more. But, at last, as the caravan of Time moves tardily by, among the captives in its train he espies an opportunity such as his heart has long craved. He leaps at it, seizes it, *redeems* it, *i.e.*, pays a price for it and makes it his own. It is exactly the modern notion of "making a corner," with this important distinction, that, whereas the modern "trust" or "combine" is purely selfish in its calculations, the intensity and astuteness recommended by the Apostle aim chiefly at the salvation and spiritual enrichment of others. Be alert, politic, ready to make sacrifices, so that you improve every opening to possess yourself of the best things and make your neighbours sharers of the riches of Christ.

¶ Ephesus was the great trading city of Proconsular Asia, where the merchants of both the east and west assembled for commerce, watching for opportunities to buy and sell and get gain. The Asian Christians were well acquainted with these things, and the words of St. Paul would come to them with great power, fitness and cogency. As merchantmen watched and seized every opportunity for buying or selling their commodities, so must Christians seize and buy up every opportunity for manifesting their true Christian character, and making known "the truth as it is in Jesus." Hostile circumstances and the powers of darkness beset us on every hand: therefore let us lose no opportunities, but, with promptness and full purpose of heart, let us "walk as children of the light."

¶ Gifts are given to trade withal for God. Opportunities are the market-days for that trade. To napkin up the one and to let slip the other will end in trouble and disconsolation. Disquietments and perplexities of heart are worms that will certainly breed in the rust of unexercised gifts. God loseth a revenue of glory and honour by such slothful souls: and He will make them sensible of it. I know some at this day whom omissions of opportunities for service are ready to sink into the grave.[1]

The text leads us to trace three ideas in the Apostle's mind: first, he thinks of opportunity as an article in the market; second, he feels that there are circumstances which increase the value of the article; and third, he sees the different types of traders, some neglecting opportunity, others eagerly buying it up.

[1] J. Moffatt, *The Golden Book of John Owen*, 209.

I.

An Article in the Market.

1. What is this commodity which we are asked to purchase? The text says it is "time." But the term used signifies more than the mere duration of anything or the measure of motion; it may be taken for opportunity, or the favourable moment for doing anything, which, if lost, can never be recovered. This is well brought out in Ecclesiastes (viii. 5). "A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment"—that is, he knows both what he ought to do and the fittest season in which to do it. So, then, we understand that time is redeemed when we diligently embrace and improve all the opportunities which God places in our way, not only for His honour and glory, but also for the good of ourselves and others, not allowing these golden opportunities to be forestalled or stolen from us and irretrievably lost by our own negligence. The exhortation of the Apostle implies that the Ephesians had lost and misimproved opportunities, and that being so they were not to be depressed, but were to double their diligence and do the more good in time to come.

We speak of life as bringing many duties. Life, says some one, *is* duty; and this is a true way of looking at it. We are hedged all round by duty. We speak of life again as a probation. We are here on trial, to show what we are and what we can do. We are being tested, and the Master is watching us to see what we are good for, and what He can do with us when this life is over. We speak of life, again, as for education. God wants to train us here for another life, and for greater service than our present. All these views of life are true; they set forth some real aspect of our life. But we may speak of our life in another way. It is a succession of opportunities. Life is always bringing opportunities to us, which we may seize and handle and turn to our profit, or which we may neglect to our loss.

¶ Christina Rossetti tells us how in one of her country walks, being then entirely ignorant of its rarity, she lighted upon a four-leaved trefoil. She goes on to say: "Perhaps I plucked and so destroyed it: I certainly left it, for most certainly I have it not. *Now* I would give something to recover that wonder: *then*, when I

might have had it for the carrying, I left it. Once missed, one may peer about in vain all the rest of one's days for a second four-leaved trefoil. No one expects to find whole fields of such: even one, for once, is an extra allowance. Life has, so to say, its four-leaved trefoils for a favoured few: and how many of us overlook once and finally our rare chance!"[1]

If thou hadst known in those far-distant days,
Which now lie buried with the long-dead past;
If thou hadst known how wistful was the gaze
Love turn'd on thee, oh! wouldst thou then have cast
One swift responsive glance, and thus have seen
Life's possibility?—It might have been!

If thou hadst known in those long-vanish'd hours
How one heart beat in sympathy with thine,
Wouldst thou have turn'd and cull'd the fragrant flowers
Love offered thee, a garland to entwine
For days to come? Ah! silence lay between
Thy heart and mine; and yet,—It might have been!

If thou hadst known how, through the long, long years,
One aching heart would yearn for thee in vain,
Wouldst thou in that far time have dried the tears
With tender answering touch, had all been plain?
Ah, who can tell! Thy lonely grave is green;
Thy memory still lives on. It might have been![2]

¶ There is a story told of General Havelock, the father of Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, that when he was serving in India, there was on one occasion need for some military expedition which would be attended with great danger and difficulty, but which would bring distinction to the officer who could lead it successfully. It properly fell to General Havelock; but there was an officer of lower rank who had made some grave mistake or failed in some previous expedition of which he had had charge, and on whose reputation a shadow was resting in consequence. Havelock gave way to the younger officer. He offered him a rare opportunity which he was not slow to embrace.[3]

2. Past opportunities are no longer in the market. St. Paul knew very well that time misspent can never be recalled. Every

[1] Mackenzie Bell, *Christina Rossetti*, 26.
[2] Una, *In Life's Garden*, 68.
[3] H. Bonner, *Sermons and Lectures*, 208.

man's past—its evil and its good; what he has done and what he has left undone—lives in the man to-day. If he has lived an evil or thoughtless life, he may, indeed, amend his ways and live a pure and noble life; but time lost is still time lost to him for ever. There are signs in St. Paul's Epistles that he was occasionally haunted by the shadow of his own past, but still he does not attempt to recall that which is irrevocable; rather, he turns his back deliberately upon it, looks away to the present and the future which are still within his power, and says, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I reach forward."

¶ Our life is not like a placid stream on which, by steadfast endeavour, we may pull back against the tide. It is, rather, like a torrent which, rising on the mountains of Eternity, plunges, the instant it has passed us, into an unfathomable abyss. Our most strenuous effort only maintains us on the edge of the fall; the stream is for ever sliding from under us; and at last we too shall be swept over and be no more seen. Whatever chances we had yesterday, last week, last year, of showing kindness or doing good, of fitting ourselves whether for earth or for heaven, are past for ever. All these opportunities are gone by. No sighs, no tears, no prodigal vows of amendment, will bring one of them back. We might have redeemed them; but now they are captives for ever; or, rather, they are martyrs, and have perished in their captivity. Henceforth there is no redemption for *them*.[1]

¶ Have you ever seen those marble statues in some public square or garden which are so fashioned into a perennial fountain that through the lips, or through the hands, the clear water flows in a perpetual stream, on and on for ever; and the marble stands there, passionless, cold, making no effort to arrest the gliding water? It is so that time flows through the hands of men, swift, never pausing till it has run itself out; and there is the man, petrified into a marble sleep, not feeling what it is that is passing away for ever.[2]

Listen to the watermill, all the livelong day;
How the creaking of the wheel wears the hours away.
Languidly the water glides, useless on and still;
Never coming back again to that watermill.
And the proverb haunts my mind, like a spell that's cast—
The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.

[1] S. Cox, *Expositions*, i. 9.
[2] James Brown, *Sermons with Memoir*, 150.

Take the lesson to yourselves, loving hearts and true;
Golden years are fleeting by, youth is fleeting too.
Try to make the most of life, lose no honest way;
Time will never bring again chances passed away.
Leave no tender word unsaid, love while life shall last—
The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.

Work while yet the daylight shines, man of strength and will;
Never does the streamlet glide useless by the mill.
Wait not till to-morrow's sun beams upon your way,
All that you can call your own lies in this, To-day.
Power, intellect, and strength, may not, cannot last—
The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.

Oh! the wasted hours of life that have drifted by—
Oh! the good we might have done, lost without a sigh,
Love that we might once have saved with but a single word,
Thoughts conceived, but never penned, perishing unheard.
Take this lesson to your heart, take, oh! hold it fast—
The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.[1]

3. We can all buy up for profitable uses what remains to us of time.

(1) The words of the Apostle have a meaning for our ordinary everyday work. Buy up your opportunities. Be diligent in business. Lay yourself to your work with your full mind and strength. There is no opposition between a godly life and the energetic and successful handling of business. A Christian man need not be a dreamer; he may be as wide-awake, as quick on the spot when there is a chance for him as the man who is not a Christian. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

¶ Of Darwin we read: "One characteristic was his respect for time; he never forgot how precious it was. He never wasted a few spare minutes from thinking that it was not worth while to set to work." His golden rule was "taking care of the minutes." In one of his letters occurs this passage: "A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life."[2]

¶ On his way to Marengo, Napoleon stopped at the door of a barber's shop, and asked his former hostess if she remembered a young officer named Bonaparte once quartered in her family.

[1] S. Dondney. [2] W. L. Watkinson, *The Education of the Heart*, 229.

"Indeed I do, and a very disagreeable inmate he was. He was always either shut up in his room, or if he walked out, he never condescended to speak to any one." "Ah! my good woman," Napoleon rejoined, "had I passed my time as you wished to have me, I should not now have been in command of the army of Italy."[1]

¶ Wasted an hour at Morton's talking of the pictures, etc. Nothing learned, came home and was in a hurry for the loss of that hour all night. I will spend no more precious time on acquaintances.[2]

(2) But the great prize of life is *spiritual*. Business is not simply our opportunity for getting on; it is our opportunity for getting up. Rightly done, daily work helps us towards the great ends of life. We may use all the machinery of our life, the money we get, the work we do, in such a way as to bring us more and more of the riches of the soul. Equality of opportunity is perhaps not conceivable, but we can use our particular circumstances so that they can further God's great design for us.

¶ The incandescent mantle is made by laying a mantle made of cotton in a chemical solution. A deposit is made on it, a process of crystallization takes place on the threads. When the mantle is used the threads are fired, and only the mantle which has been formed on them is left. This world, our earthly lot, all the machinery of our life, is only the cotton thread for the making of the soul. It will all be burned up, and only so much character, so much soul, as we have made will remain.[3]

¶ Carey, before his call to the mission field, used to go about from village to village preaching, for his soul was filled with the love of God. One day a friend came to him and said, "Mr. Carey, I want to speak to you very seriously." "Well," said Mr. Carey, "what is it?" The friend replied, "By your going about preaching as you do, you are neglecting your business. If you only attended to your business more you would be all right, and would soon get on and prosper; but, as it is, you are simply neglecting your business." "Neglecting my business," said Carey, looking at him steadily, "My business is to extend the Kingdom of God, and I only cobble shoes to pay expenses."[4]

¶ During December an extraordinary thing happened, for he did allow that there *was* a small present he would like to have

[1] J. E. Foster, *Pain*, 217. [2] *Life and Letters of Frederic Shields*, 43.
[3] H. Bonner, *Sermons and Lectures*, 211.
[4] J. Duff, *Illuminative Flashes*, 103.

given to him on Christmas Day! This was a seal, and one of Dutch design was found. On the evening of Christmas Day we began to talk of what might be engraved upon it, and I asked him to invent a motto for it. He was silent for a second or two, and then said, "I think I should like to say, 'The Utmost for the Highest.'"[1]

(3) The special opportunity that the Apostle urges us to embrace is that of rendering service to God and man. "As we have opportunity," says Paul, "let us do good unto all men." Every Christian ought to be intent on helping in some form to make the world a happier and a better world. The troubled, the weary, the unfortunate are always near to us. There is always something within our reach which we could do, if we would. The troubles and misfortunes of others are often our opportunity.

¶ One day or other the world will slip through our fingers, and all we hold dearest in it. Only the *good* we have done will remain. That cannot pass away. It is written down in the memory of God, registered in the books of His Divine Retribution. We will need it all when we come to give in our account of our service and go to get our wages—our love, and kindliness, and faith, and unselfishness, and well-doing—we will need it all and more than all when God puts the question to us: "Of what use have you been in My world?"[2]

¶ A heathen king once said that that day was lost in which he had conferred no benefit on a friend; and shall not we feel that day indeed to be lost on which we have returned no thanks to God for the numberless common blessings which cheer and gladden us, in which we have not sought in gratitude to extend to others the hope which we feel ourselves?[3]

¶ It is related of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, that in mid-winter, as she carried in her robe a supply of food to some poor people in the mountains, and as she climbed the steep and slippery path, she met her husband returning from the chase. "What hast thou here, my Elizabeth?" said he. "What art thou carrying away now?" And as she stood confused and blushing, he opened her dress and found it full of red and white roses, lovelier than those of earth. So did the Middle Ages invent legends to glorify the sweet charity of this noble woman, who spent her time, strength, and means in caring for the poor people afflicted by

[1] M. S. Watts, *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 137.
[2] *Dr. MacGregor of St. Cuthberts*, 109.
[3] B. F. Westcott, *Village Sermons*, 321.

famine and plague. Especially she loved children, and built hospitals for them; and they loved her so that they ran after her, calling out "Mother! mother!" The sick children she took into her hospital, washed and dressed their poor little limbs, and bought them toys and gifts to amuse them. For this she was canonized; and she well deserved it, not because of the miracles which they tell of her, but for that which is more Divine than any miracle, her tender heart and love of humanity.[1]

Up, up, my soul, the long-spent time redeeming;
Sow thou the seeds of better deeds and thought;
Light other lamps while yet thy lamp is beaming—
The time is short.

Think of the good thou might'st have done when brightly
The suns to thee life's choicest season brought;
Hours lost to God in pleasure passing lightly—
The time is short.

If thou hast friends, give them thy best endeavour,
Thy warmest impulse, and thy purest thought,
Keeping in mind and word and action ever—
The time is short.[2]

II.

Circumstances that Increase the Value of the Article.

St. Paul regards life as an opportunity for which a price must be paid; the full price of constant watchfulness and endeavour and sacrifice. He speaks in the language of the market or the exchange; and far down in the undercurrents of his mind seems to be moving the thought that, if men would but expend upon the investment of their intellectual and spiritual possessions one-tenth of the pains they give to the investment of their worldly goods, their redemption would already have begun. And yet it is in the spiritual sphere that it is most needful to pay the price. Experience confirms the protest of King David that he could not —not merely *would* not, but *could* not—make an offering to the Lord his God of that which had cost him nothing. In all the higher walks of life, we neither get nor give anything of value, if it has cost us nothing in the getting or the giving.

[1] J. F. Clarke. [2] E. Prentiss.

1. *Opportunities both rise in price and grow fewer every time we refuse to purchase them.*—If it be hard to subdue passion and the cravings of irregular desire to-day, it will be harder to-morrow, should we leave the hours of to-day unimproved. If it would cost us much to do what we know to be the will of the Lord to-day, it will cost us more every day we neglect our duty. A man who has long disobeyed the Divine will has in doing that will difficulties which the obedient can but faintly conceive. His polluted memory, his perverted and obstinate will, the force of sinful habit, the stings of impure desire, or even the mere custom of indifference to things unseen and eternal, turn the obedience which should be his happiness into mere labour and pain.

This moment's thine, thou never more may'st hear
The clarion-summons-call thus loud and clear;
What now thou buyest cheap may yet prove dear.

Part with thine all, spare not the needed cost;
That which thou partest with were better lost,
Thy selfish worldly schemes more wisely crossed.

Thy loss infinitesimal, thy gain
Endless, immense; thy momentary pain
The single step the boundless bliss to attain!

Eye hath not seen, man's ear hath never heard,
Nor heart conceived—save some faint image blurred—
The bliss of those who keep the Christly word—
Let go; my soul, let go![1]

2. *Evil times give a special value to opportunity.*—The disciples of Jesus Christ, living in the midst of a great pagan city, were exposed to grievous and continuous perils. The moral corruption of the ancient world found there its most complete and deadly expression. It entered into all the relations of life—commerce, politics, society, worst of all, religion, were steeped in it. The very atmosphere of existence was heavy with gross sin. Evil, which in the country diffused itself over a wider area, and was at all times checked and shadowed by the solemn and beautiful scenes of nature, was here brought together into a centre, and obtruded upon the notice without hindrance or intermission. To

[1] William Hall, "Via Crucis."

borrow Cardinal Newman's simile, "It was basking under the sun, and rioting and extending itself to its amplest dimensions, like some glittering serpent, or spotted pard . . . without interposition from heaven or earth in correction of so awful a degradation." Such a centre and focus of evil was ancient Ephesus.

¶ St. Paul sets a good example of his own precept by his own practice. When he wrote this Epistle he was a prisoner, bound to a soldier. The days were evil for him: but he redeemed them. He made his prison to be a pulpit, from which he preached to the world. The Roman soldier's presence was a perpetual memento to him that he himself was a soldier of Christ. Every part of the soldier's armour suggested to him a weapon of Christian warfare, to be wielded in the cause of Christ.[1]

¶ On the death of General Booth of the Salvation Army, one of his lieutenants was asked what the probable effect would be on the army. The reply was, "I think that probably the departure of the General will mean the consecration afresh of every Salvationist to the great work to which the General gave his life. Now that he is gone, I must do more."

III.

Types of Traders.

The Apostle speaks of the wise and the foolish, and urges the Ephesians to be among the wise, walking circumspectly, redeeming the time, and looking to see what the will of the Lord is. All men may be divided into two great classes, according as they do or do not perceive that life is an opportunity. To the one class life has a twofold meaning: it means the opportunity of development; it means the opportunity of service to God and man. To the other class life has no meaning at all; they simply drift from day to day; and whether it is business or amusement of which they see most, there is no real aim or purpose in what they do. The lethargic let chance after chance to do good slip away unseized, unimproved; the wise and watchful, however, charm by a smile, warn by a word, persuade by an action, prevail by a prayer every hour; they are like the quicksilver that does not permit a particle of gold to escape.

[1] H. G. Miller, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 278

¶ If I were Dr. Nansen and proposed to you to join my North Pole expedition, your option would be momentous; for this would probably be your only similar opportunity, and your choice now would either exclude you from the North Pole sort of immortality altogether or put at least the chance of it into your hands. He who refuses to embrace a unique opportunity loses the prize as surely as if he tried and failed.[1]

1. *The foolish miss or misuse their opportunity.*—There they sit, like Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield*, dreaming that something is going to happen which will place them on the wave of prosperity and sweep them into the harbour of success. They never do anything, because that for which they are looking never happens.

¶ Some times are taken from us by force; some others are stolen from us; and others slip away. But the most disgraceful loss is that which arises from our own negligence.[2]

¶ Spend not your time in that which profits not; for your labour and your health, your time and your studies, are very valuable; and it is a thousand pities to see a diligent and hopeful person spend himself in gathering cockle-shells and little pebbles, in telling sands upon the shores, and making garlands of useless daisies.[3]

¶ Perhaps there stands in modern literature no more pathetic figure than that of Amiel, whose gifts were so high, and whose achievements were so meagre. One of his friends writes, "We found him always kindly and amiable, a nature one might trust and lean upon with perfect security. Yet he wakened in us but one regret. We could never understand how it was a man so richly gifted, produced nothing, or only trivialities." In his own journal one of the last entries, written with trembling hand, ten days before his death, reads thus: "So much promise, to end in so meagre a result! I shall end like the Rhine—lost among the sands, and the hour is close by, when my thread of water shall have for ever disappeared."

If this befell: At some fair dawning-time,
  Ere failed the wistful world its dreams and dew,
  Sheer from the height of heaven reached down to you
A cloud-piled stair more pure than glistening rime,

[1] W. James, *The Will to Believe*, 4.
[2] Seneca.
[3] Jeremy Taylor.

And firm as marble wrought, in flights sublime
That pierced the void, whence lights come faint and few,
Beyond all starry outposts: toward what new
Wild-wondered shores—ah, would you dare to climb?

And if, while yet you doubted, lo, too late,
You saw it reft past range of fear and hope,
Caught up the vast, and here you needs must wait
Mere day's returning; would not narrow scope
Wide earth yield? Yea, the azure's amplest cope
Enclose your spirit like a dungeon-grate?[1]

2. *The wise perceive the value of opportunity and buy it up.*—That is to say, they reclaim it by hard toil from misuse, they turn every fraction of it to good account; they even create occasions to carry out the great ends of life.

¶ For all men alike, failure is blindness to the strategic element in events; success is readiness for instant action when the opportune moment arrives. When nature has fully ripened an opportunity man must stretch out his hand and pluck it. Inventions may be defined as great minds detecting the strategic moment in nature; Galileo finding a lens in the ox's eye; Watt witnessing steam lift an iron lid; Columbus observing an unknown wood drifting upon the shore. To untold multitudes nature offered these opportune moments for discovery, but only Galileo, Watt, and Columbus were ready to seize them. As for the rest, this is our only answer to nature: "While thy servant was busy here and there, the strategic moment was gone."[2]

¶ After much consideration we settled the question where to spend the winter by taking a house at Brighton. There was the advantage of a well-lighted studio, built for a picture-gallery, large enough to take in his big painting of the "Court of Death," and as many others as he wished to have there. His doctor knew and recommended this house, and to 31 Sussex Square we went on November 1. A big platform was built up in this studio to make it possible for him to work upon the "Court of Death." When he went into that room to find that these preparations had been made, his feeling seemed to be a sort of despair at the amount of work that still remained undone. But before an hour had passed he had pulled himself together, saying, "Come, this won't do"; and the frail little figure stood drawn up erect and full of unconquerable spirit. He had worked hard the last day

[1] Jane Barlow. [2] N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 222.

before leaving Little Holland House, upon the "Physical Energy." There were some roughened bits and deep scores he was anxious to fill up. "The idea of its being left in that state was dreadful to me," he said, adding, "in case anything should happen to me." He lived always as a good pilgrim, girt and ready for the long journey whenever the summons should come. The tick of the clock had in it for him the sound of Time's footstep. "I know it," he said, "and remember that each line that I draw is one less, one nearer the last."[1]

¶ In a letter from Uganda during the days of fierce persecutions in which that Church was cradled, the following phrase occurs—"Times of persecution are busy printing times." The undaunted men who planted the standard of the cross in Uganda had already reduced the language to writing, and translated portions of Scripture, with prayers and hymns, for the use of the Baganda. And during those dark days, when active and aggressive work was unwise, if not impossible, they plied the printing-press and issued from it the first literature of that wonderful race, which Mr. Stanley found them studying when he visited them on one of his journeys.[2]

¶ Sometimes Bonaparte forgot his part, and displayed the shrewd, calculating, hard-working man behind the mask, who was less a fatalist than a personified fate, less a child of fortune than its maker. "Great events," he wrote from Italy, "ever depend but upon a single hair. The adroit man profits by everything, neglects nothing which can increase his chances; the less adroit, by sometimes disregarding a single chance, fails in everything." Here is the whole philosophy of Bonaparte's life.[3]

Another day may bring another mind,
A mind to learn, when there is none to teach;
To follow, when no leader we can find;
To enjoy, when good is now beyond our reach:

A better mind, but not a better time,
A mind to will, but not a time to do
What had been done, if we in life's bright prime,
When God was ready, had been ready too.

But what the better for his better mind
Were changing man, and God not still the same?
When guide and light and joy we cannot find
Unchanging love has sent us useful shame.

[1] M. S. Watts, *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 135.
[2] T. W. Drury, *The Prison-Ministry of St. Paul*, 98.
[3] W. M. Sloane, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, i. 321.

This other mind may bring another day,
For days are given as man for days prepares;
Though many days of grace have passed away,
The grace that gave them still the trifler spares;

And saddens times while Time itself may last,
That unwise man may come to better thought,
Accept his future, and renounce his past,
And be by sorrow into goodness brought.[1]

[1] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 122.

St. Paul's Ruling Passion.

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St. Paul's Ruling Passion.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—Phil. i. 21.

1. The words of this text are not the words of a newly-born Christian, but the language of a full-grown man in Christ. They contain the ripe experience of a well-matured Christian. There are thirty years of Christian life and experience at the back of these words, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." We must not expect to leap into a religious experience of this kind; like St. Paul, we must grow in grace and knowledge to attain it. St. Paul grew more of a saint every day he lived, and his last days were the crowning days of a glorious and triumphant life.

2. When the Apostle wrote the sentence, "For me to die is gain," he felt that he was near the experience of which he spoke. Death could not appear to him as a remote event, but as one that might come to him at any hour. He was in prison, and amid all the uncertainties of such a position. The executioner might enter his cell at any moment. He felt that the hour of his martyrdom was drawing nigh. He was writing, as it were, his farewell love-letter to the church which, of the many he founded, he seems to have loved the best. He had led a chequered life, and it was drawing to a close. It was under such circumstances that, sitting in his lonely cell, he calmly wrote to his dear children in Christ at Philippi, "For me to die is gain." It was not a boast, it was not even exultation; it was only a statement, but a statement in which all the forces of his faith, all the fulness of his hope, all the longing of his soul, were centred. It was as the sky when it spreads out in calm, motionless, unruffled blue; no shade of jasper, no tinge of azure in it; but here and there a deep-seated star shines out, and the gazer feels that at any moment

the blue may break into orange, and the curtain be changed to the colour of the out-streaming glory behind it.

3. A circumstance that seemed more deplorable than Paul's imprisonment, and one more likely to depress the spirit and almost break the heart of the great Apostle, was the fact that, while many of those who preached the gospel preached it in love and in hearty sympathetic co-operation with him, knowing that he was "set for the defence of the gospel," others, filled with envy, while in some sense preaching Christ, never missed an opportunity of making a thrust at him. So they stirred up contention and strife, hoping to add to his afflictions; and this greatly aggravated and discouraged his loyal friends at Philippi. But Paul's own reply was in the ringing words: "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." And then he broke out in the jubilant language of this text, a single golden sentence that ought to be engraven on every Christian heart and wrought out in every Christian life, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

4. The Apostle's thoughts and feelings have here, as it were, a threefold bend in their flow. First, we have the clear unhesitating statement of the comparative advantages of life and death to a Christian man, when thought of as affecting himself alone. The one is Christ, the other gain. But we neither live nor die to ourselves; and no man has a right to think of life or death only from the point of view of his own advantage. So the problem is not so simple as it looked. Life here is the condition of fruitful labour here. There are his brethren and his work to think of. These bring him to a stand, and check the rising wish. He knows not which state to prefer. The stream is dammed back between rocks, and it chafes and foams and seems to lose its way among them. Then comes a third bend in the flow of

thought and feeling, and he gladly apprehends it as his present duty to remain at his work. If his own joy is thereby less, his brethren's will be more. If he is not to depart and be with Christ, he will remain and be with Christ's friends, which is, in some sort, being with Him too. If he may not have the gain of death, he will have the fruit of work in life.

¶ Hamlet is oppressed by the frightful discovery that his uncle has murdered his father and then hastily married his mother, and that upon him lies the duty of avenging his father's death. With this burden weighing upon him, life becomes unbearable; he longs to be rid of it, and he cries:

> To be, or not to be: that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
> No more; and, by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd.

But then he remembers that sleep is not always unconsciousness; it may be troubled with dreams.

> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause. There's the respect,
> That makes calamity of so long life.

Who, he says, would bear all the troubles and vexations and wrongs and rebuffs of life, when he could at once put an end to them, if it were not for the fear of what may come after?

> Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of?
> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

Now, clearly in this famous passage Shakespeare is setting Hamlet before us simply as a man of the world, thinking of death as an intelligent heathen might think of it—as a terrible mystery,

which might or might not be the end of conscious existence. And I ask you to compare this with St. Paul's view. Hamlet, like St. Paul, would gladly have done with life in the flesh, but he wishes simply to escape from the ills of life, and is frightened back by the dread of what may come after death. St. Paul wishes to depart and to be with Christ, he has no shrinking fear of "the undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns"; to him to die is not escape from trouble merely, but positive gain; but he accepts life in order that he may do some more service in it. Hamlet regards both life and death as evils, and does not know which is the less; St. Paul regards both as blessings and knows not which to prefer. To Hamlet, death is going out of the light into the dark; to St. Paul, it is rather going out of the dark into the light of Christ.[1]

I.

The Ideal Life.

In every possible phase of the word "life," Christ is the life of the Christian. To live is Christ, for He is the mystical source from whom all our life flows. With Him is the fountain of life, and all life, both of body and of spirit, is from Him, by Him, and in Him. "To live is Christ," for He is the aim and object as well as the Lord of all, and no other is worth calling life but that which is *for* Him by willing consecration, as well as *from* Him by constant derivation. "To live is Christ," for He is the model of all our life, and the one all-sufficient law for us is to follow Him.

¶ There were two outstanding characters residing in Rome at the time of St. Paul's imprisonment. These were Nero, the Emperor, and Seneca, the philosopher. What is Nero's conception of life? To live, to him, is to be as unbridled as a wild beast in pleasure and passion and revelry. If that is to live, it is a pity that we cannot forget that we are not beasts. It is a pity that we have a conscience. It is a pity that we fear to die. It is a pity that we cannot forget that there is a hereafter. The answer of Nero does not satisfy the unceasing desire of my heart for a noble conception of life. What is Seneca's conception of life? "Life," says he, "is to enjoy oneself in the realms of ideas—to think, to learn, to master the laws of Nature and make the mind the master of the man." The answer of Seneca is as far as the East is from

[1] R. E. Bartlett.

the West from Nero's conception of life, and as great in value and superiority. It is a good answer, for it is a blessed thing to live in the world of thoughts at the feet of poets and scientists, philosophers and theologians. We cannot think too much and too well, and spend too much time in the company of the best thinkers of the ages. But Seneca's answer is too vague and too negative and abstract. It is good to think, but it is not good enough to remain like a fairy among the hills and valleys of enchanted ideas. What is Paul's conception of life? "Life," answers Paul, "is to reproduce Jesus Christ in character, by thought, word and deed. Life is to preach Christ; to cross mountains and seas, to magnify Christ in a prison. In a word, life to me is Christ—Christ equals life, and life equals Christ."[1]

O Christ upon the Tree,
Thou art not dead to me:
Though Thy pierced arms be cold
They yet my heart enfold:
Though Thy head droop in death
I draw from Thee my breath,
Round Thee my being rolls
Thou art my soul of souls:
O dead Christ on the Tree,
I only live in Thee.[2]

1. *Paul derived his life from Christ.*—He felt that he was indebted for the life he lived, not to any happy combination of circumstances, or to the sudden awakening into energy of any dormant element in his nature, but to Christ Himself, with whom for the first time it had come into direct and open contact, and from whom it took its new and triumphant departure. He it was who had met him and struck him down, who had shown him his error, quickened him with His Spirit, and sent him forth to live and die under the spell of His ascendancy. And we must not imagine that when the Apostle says, "to me to live is Christ," he uses Christ simply as an equivalent to what we call Christianity, or the Christian Church. A man may be indebted to the Church for his creed or his opinions; he may have received from it all the notions he has about God and the world to come; but he cannot possibly receive life from it. Nothing can communicate life but a

[1] J. S. Rees. [2] Edwin Hatch, "Juxta Crucem Magdalena."

living person—neither sacraments, nor worship, nor any orthodoxy, however pure. Extract from these all they are able to yield, and you will not get life. That flows only from one Source, is contained for us only in one Person, and that Person is Christ. From Him St. Paul's life came, and into Him it pushed its springs and was abundantly fed.

¶ There are three cardinal words in the passage, "me," "live," "Christ." The middle term "live" is defined in the union of the two extremes. The two carbon electrodes of the arc-lamp are brought into relationship, and the result is a light of brilliant intensity. And these two terms "me" and "Christ" are brought into relationship, and there is revealed "the light of life," and I become "alive unto God." The human finds life in union with the Divine. Now this is the only contact which justifies the usage of the term "life." Any other application of the word is illegitimate and degrading. The word "life" stands defined in the relationship of the Apostle's words. But we take other extremes and combine them, and we name the resultant "life." "For me to live is money." Me—money! And we describe the union as "life." We are using a gloriously spacious and wealthy term to label a petty and superficial gratification, which is as transient and uncertain as the ephemera that dance through the feverish hour of a single summer's day. "For me to live is pleasure!" Me—pleasure! And we describe the union as "life." It is a mere sensation, having no more relationship to life in its reality than the sluggish and ill-defined existence of the amoeba has to the large mental and spiritual exercises of the Apostle John. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." "For me to live is fame." Me—fame! And we describe the union as "life." It is a mere galvanized spasm, and is no more worthy of the regal term "life" than a will-o'-the-wisp is worthy of bearing the name of the sun. Of all these relationships we may employ the New Testament indictment and say, "Thou hast a name to *live* and art dead." All other combinations fail. By no other fellowships can we produce the resultant. Life is the unique product of a unique union. "This is life, to know Jesus." "For to me to *live* is Christ." Such was the rich and ineffable life of the Apostle Paul.[1]

2. *Paul looked to Christ as the great end and ideal of life.*—In every walk of life men are haunted by the dream of perfection. The last word is never said, the last effort is never made. Ideals are

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The School of Calvary*, 11.

necessary to growth, an absolute condition of progress. John Stuart Mill said, "A pupil from whom nothing is ever demanded which he cannot do never does all he can." If men are to put forth all the powers that are in them, if they are to be fired with enthusiasm, and brightened by hope, they must set their affections on things above. The words of St. Paul describe the condition of progress in every pursuit—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." The men to whom this world owes most have been contemptuously called "visionaries," "dreamers." They have saved the world from putrefaction. They stir and thrill the generous heart of youth. Men sick of commonplace routine, wearied by monotony, are roused by them to fresh effort and new enterprises. They tell of a glory that is to come, and their fellows are roused and kindled once again.

¶ Just imagine where the Apostle's life would have gone had it followed its original bent. What a crusade of persecution it would have become! With what swift and relentless fury he would have destroyed, one after another, the congregations of the hateful sect! Would not the name of the Apostle of the Gentiles have been found first on the roll of those who have devastated and devoured the Church of God? To him to live would have been not Christ, but anti-Christ. But now that his life had taken its rise in Christ it made for Him as its end. Left to work itself out to its natural issue, it would develop and expand exactly into such a life as Christ lived. He himself would become even as Christ was, pure as He was pure, perfect as He was perfect, his whole nature answering to His, enlarging till it filled out precisely into His stature and mould, line answering to line, and feature to feature. In short, Christ in His perfect manhood was that into which he would grow.[1]

3. *The Apostle is not engrossed with a merely impersonal ideal.* —He *knows* his Lord, knows Him for himself, knows Him, as it were, face to face and heart to heart; and he is possessed by the conviction that he and his Master are one in a union so close that the lesser is lost and fulfilled in the greater. It is difficult to find an analogy for this spiritual experience. Perhaps the nearest we can come to it is that of the father who lives his life again in the career of his boy, or the woman whose whole existence is bound up with that of her lover, or the soldier or the clansman of

[1] C. Moinet, *The Great Alternative*, 61.

olden days whose body and soul were willingly yielded to the service of his chief, a service in which all the value of life was summed up for him. You know it is possible for one personality to fulfil itself, as it were, in ministering to and in living again in the career of another. This is what St. Paul did, and the sentence, "To me to live is Christ," is the expression of it.

¶ Language like this has sometimes been used to set forth the power of the pursuits, relationships, affections of human life. Patriotism has been such a passion to many a man that he could say, "To me to live is my country—my country lives in me!" So many a man is held and swayed by human affection. He may pursue his calling in distant lands, but in all the toil and change his dear ones live in him, and he lives for them. The influence of the departed is often a similar power. Tennyson tells how his departed friend became a celestial presence—

> Thou standest in the rising sun,
> And in the setting thou art fair.

The influence of a commanding, captivating personality is great. In a real sense Dr. Arnold lived in Dean Stanley, who said, "I certainly feel that I have hardly a free will of my own on any subject about which he has written or spoken." Dean Vaughan tells of that growing and absorbing devotion to his great head-master, of which he sometimes accused himself as tending to the idolatrous. The influence of Arnold's character gave him a sort of fire of zeal which had in it the making of the future man, with that unresting energy, that forthright purpose, that resistless attraction, that clean and pure soul. And Mr. Prothero speaks of the influence of Dr. Arnold's character as "permeating Stanley's mind, remodelling his ideas, inspiring him with manly intents, earnest feelings, and large thoughts, which grew with his growth."[1]

¶ About the year 1850 a little band of missionaries landed on the bleak shores of Tierra del Fuego. The natives, whom they found in a savage state, were very jealous and unfriendly, and their position was one of great difficulty and danger. Eventually they all perished by starvation. They were obliged to watch by turns at night, lest they should be attacked by the savages. It was agreed that the guard should sound a whistle if he saw any danger. Amongst this brave devoted band was a young doctor named Richard Williams, who had left a good position, family, and friends that he might aid in the conversion of these poor

[1] J. Lewis, *The Mystic Secret*, 204.

savages. One morning, about four o'clock, two dangerous-looking natives approached the guard, and the whistle was sounded. Williams had just fallen asleep a short time before the alarm was given, and in that short sleep had a dream, which he thus relates in his own words. He says: "At the moment the whistle disturbed me from my sleep, after some hours of troubled and anxious thoughts, I had just begun to slumber. During the night I could not but feel how dark was our present horizon, and what dangers, difficulties, and privations awaited us on all hands. I greatly deplored the presence of such thoughts, and resisted them over and over again with little success. But my compassionate Jesus enabled me to look up to Him as ready to help me even against myself. In this frame of mind I had sunk to sleep, and when the alarm awoke me it was just at the moment when I seemed to be hearing the songs of angels singing, 'We live to Christ alone.' Yes, yes," adds Dr. Williams, "my heart, my soul responded, 'By the grace of my blessed Saviour, I will live to Christ alone.'" This dream was a source of much comfort to him in the privations and trials he had afterwards to endure, and his death was very happy and joyful. He indeed could have echoed the Apostle's language and said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." For so triumphant was his end that he declared he "would not have exchanged situations with any man living, for the hope laid up for him in heaven filled his whole heart with joy and gladness."[1]

4. *Paul found in Christ the ruling passion of life.*—There was never such a lover as Paul, and never such a self-sacrificing labourer for others as he. But it was the constraining love of Christ that girded and impelled him. Not for his own sake did he live, nor for the sake of his countrymen, nor for the sake of humanity; but he writes, "ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake," the motive being a personal love for Him who loved him and gave Himself for him. This is what he meant when he said, "For to me to live is Christ," and this is the Christian conception of life, and this is its highest realization.

Principles, in order to dominate and suffuse the life, need to have the power of awakening enthusiasm; truth needs to be aglow to work to any purpose. And what but the thought of a great personality can awaken enthusiasm? It is the ring of a name, summing up in itself all truth and goodness, that puts heart and

[1] J. Reid.

soul and eyes into principles: it is this that makes men aware what the word enthusiasm means. "For me to live is Christ"—that is something to stir the blood, that is something to make the nerves tingle and the heart throb. "For me to live is Christ"—that speaks of Gethsemane and Calvary, of days and nights devoted to the highest good of man; that speaks the noblest thoughts that have ever been uttered, revelations of God and searchings of the human heart; that breathes the tenderest wooings to the sinful soul. It is the bugle call to the sad and despondent. "For me to live is Christ"—with that there is light in the darkest hour and hope in the most desperate day. Christ Jesus—with that name of infinite love we dare not be cast down, we dare not yield to sloth or sin, we dare not keep terms with distrust. "For to me to live is Christ" is a word of joy. Rejoice! Rejoice! is the word that issues from Him as the perfume from a flower. Christ purposes to conquer the world by great, overpowering joy. If you have deep and abiding joy in Christ you know what it is to be always triumphant, and yet always humble. Your triumph is in Him.

¶ Sunday, July 10. I slept on deck last night and enjoyed it much—simply and solely slept. I am now a masher in whites. Though hot, we had an interesting service—the captain read prayers admirably; the purser read lessons, fatigued; I preached and enjoyed it. I felt homely on the first paragraph of John xxi. I do love Christ; He is simply, solely everything. You know, people speak about a religious life, and they mean going to church and prayer-meetings. That is not it, surely, I feel it, and believe it. Christ everywhere, in all things. Means are good, but they are only bulrushes. It must be Christ all round, Alpha and Omega, end, between and beginning.[1]

¶ When Henry Martyn was labouring as a missionary in the East, some reproach was cast by a native who was with him on the name of Jesus. And the saintly man says, "I was cut to the soul by this blasphemy. I told him I could not endure existence if Jesus were not glorified; that it would be hell to me if He were to be always thus dishonoured." And when the person who had occasioned him this grief expressed sorrow for his unintentional offence, yet would know the cause why it distressed him—"If any one pluck out your eyes," was his reply, "there is no saying why

[1] James Chalmers, *Autobiography and Letters*, 285.

you feel pain. It is feeling. It is because I am one with Christ that I am thus dreadfully wounded."[1]

5. *Paul regarded life as an opportunity to serve his fellow-men.*—Life assumes a new value when we view it as an opportunity to serve others. And no man has a right to forget others in settling the question whether he would live or die. We see the Apostle here brought to a stand by two conflicting currents of feelings. For himself he would gladly go, for his friends' sake he is drawn to the opposite choice. He has "fallen into a place where two seas meet," and for a minute or two his will is buffeted from side to side by the "violence of the waves." The obscurity of his language, arising from its broken construction, corresponds to the struggle of his feelings. As the Revised Version has it, "If to live in the flesh,—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not." By which fragmentary sentence, rightly representing as it does the roughness of the Greek, we understand him to mean that if living on in this life is the condition of his gaining fruit from his toil then he has to check the rising wish, and is hindered from decisive preference either way. Both motives act upon him, one drawing him deathward, the other holding him firmly here. He is in a dilemma, pinned in, as it were, between the two opposing pressures. On the one hand he has the desire (not "a desire," as the Authorized Version has it, as if it were but one among many) turned towards departing to be with Christ; but on the other, he knows that his remaining here is for the present all but indispensable for the immature faith of the Churches which he has founded. The attraction of life contends with the attraction of heaven in these verses. That is a conflict of which many good men know something, but which does not take with many of us the shape that it assumed with Paul. Drawn, as he is, by the supreme desire of close union with his Master, for the sake of which he is ready to depart, he is tugged back even more strongly by the thought that, if he stays here, he can go on working and gaining results from his labour. It does not follow that he did not expect service if he were with Christ. We may be very sure that Paul's heaven was no idle heaven, but one of happy activity and larger service. But he will not be able

[1] A. Roberts, *Miscellaneous Sermons*, 2.

to help these dear friends at Philippi and elsewhere who need him, as he knows. So love to them drags at his skirts, and ties him here.

¶ "Other-worldliness" finds no place in the truly Christian conduct of life. Not so to wrap ourselves up in the Christ and in the things of Christ as to be oblivious of the duties and joys and sorrows that visit us, but so to wrap ourselves up in Christ and in the things of Christ as to be the more mindful of duties and joys and sorrows, remembering that by them, by our faithfulness in them, our Lord makes the triumph of His gospel to come. What worthier interest than that could life possess? Christ calls to us, "If all your heart is Mine—if for you to live is Christ—you can best show it by caring, for My sake, for the common experiences of every day." He uses them, and makes them holy so. Christianity produce indifference to life! No, to the Christian disciple everything that enters into life glows and burns with an interest unsurpassed, for Christ uses it; by his heart's absorption in Christ the Christian disciple is sent back to his life with a care for it which will make him live it out to the full, for Christ uses it; and when we can truly say "To me to live is Christ," then life becomes transfigured and glorified as by selfishness it could never be transfigured and glorified, for Christ uses it. And so Christian discipleship combines the most entire selflessness with the greatest practical sanity, if I may use the word. The more enthusiastic we are in the cause of Christ's gospel, the more will our life, even in the most commonplace incidents of it, come to have worth in our eyes, since by our life and by our faithfulness in life does the cause of Christ's gospel win its way.[1]

¶ Rousseau once said that Christians could not make good citizens or good soldiers, "because, their hearts being fixed upon another world they must necessarily be indifferent to the success or failure of such enterprises as they take up here." But this theory is contradicted by facts. It will scarcely be denied that the most useful citizens and the bravest soldiers the world has ever seen have been believers in immortality, and loyal servants of Christ. This may easily be understood when we consider that God has set in man's heart the love of life and the law of self-preservation, over against the belief in another world, to keep the balance true and to adjust the claims of the life that now is in due relation to those of the life to come. It was because the Apostle was so evenly loaded on either side that he stood so erect and walked thus steadily under his burden. And hence it is that

[1] H. W. Clark, *Meanings and Methods of the Spiritual Life*, 234.

the Christian, though he desires a better country, does not on that account despise his present lodging.[1]

¶ Summing up the Bishop's character, a Dignitary of Lincoln says: "Saintliness and shrewdness were equally characteristic of him. He never touched a topic without displaying an original view. He was, in the best and highest sense, a man of the world, without an atom of worldliness."[2]

"To me to live is Christ"—and yet the days
Are days of toiling men;
We rise at morn, and tread the beaten ways
And lay us down again.

How is it that this base, unsightly life,
Can yet be Christ alone?
Our common need, and weariness, and strife
While common days wear on?

Then saw I how before a Master wise
A shapeless stone was set;
He said, "Therein a form of beauty lies,
Though none behold it yet.

When all beside it shall be hewn away,
That glorious shape shall stand,
In beauty of the everlasting day,
Of the unsullied land."

6. It is sometimes charged against the Christian religion that it *leads men to take a false view of life, and a selfish view of death.* It kindles an ecstatic rapture which makes men discontented with the prosaic realities of life and leads them to long for a luxurious, sensuous heaven. This contention, in so far as it has any truth, simply shows the unfairness of judging any religion or system of thought by the one-sided representation of its feeblest followers. Enthusiastic martyrs have welcomed death so eagerly that their enemies have been led to regard their religion as a fatal fanaticism, which kindled in their minds a blind hatred of life. Even the great teachers have been inclined to insist too much on the power "to die well," as the main proof of the inspiration and

[1] A. E. Hutchison.

[2] G. W. E. Russell, *Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln*, 113.

solace that come from religion. Without such fearless enthusiasm, without the high consciousness that even life may be purchased too dearly, great movements could never have fought their way in the face of fierce bigotry and cruel persecution; but, on the other hand, it is well to be reminded that in rapturous exalted moods there is as much danger of a narrow selfishness as in any other form of life. Paul's balanced statement, his lack of prompt decision and definite choice, give us a noble vision of life and a sublime thought of death; from this point of view, life is a sacred trust, and death a great deliverance.

¶ When Ambrose was on his death-bed, Stilicho, apprehending the loss of such a man to Italy and to Christendom, urged the principal inhabitants of Milan to entreat the effective prayers of the Bishop for his own recovery. "I have not so lived among you," replied Ambrose, "as to be ashamed to live. I have so good a Master, that I am not afraid to die." [1]

¶ David Hill's talk when he visited us at Headingley College, Leeds, in 1881, was not only earnest, but it ranged over many subjects, and it showed much insight, much knowledge, much intellectual force. Martin Luther once said that a Christian ought to be the most worldly of men, and in Martin Luther's sense of the word, that all the affairs of this world were the affairs of Christ, David Hill was very "worldly." To hear him discuss mission work in China was to hear him discuss China and all that belonged to her. That her whole national life should be subjected to Christ involved much thought, force, and enterprise on the part of His followers, and it was not possible that they could be content with the inadequate resources and the partial and limited operations that already existed.[2]

¶ I had felt a return of spleen during my stay at Armidale, and had it not been that I had Dr. Johnson to contemplate, I should have sunk into dejection; but his firmness supported me. I looked at him, as a man whose head is turning giddy at sea looks at a rock, or any fixed object. I wondered at his tranquillity. He said, "Sir, when a man retires into an island, he is to turn his thoughts entirely to another world. He has done with this." BOSWELL—"It appears to me, Sir, to be very difficult to unite a due attention to this world, and that which is to come; for, if we engage eagerly in the affairs of life, we are apt to be totally forgetful of a future state; and, on the other hand, a steady

[1] Milman, *History of Christianity*, iii. 169.
[2] J. E. Hellier, *Life of David Hill*, 157.

contemplation of the awful concerns of eternity renders all objects here so insignificant, as to make us indifferent and negligent about them." JOHNSON—"Sir, Dr. Cheyne has laid down a rule to himself on this subject, which should be imprinted on every mind: To neglect nothing to secure my eternal peace, more than if I had been certified I should die within the day: nor to mind anything that my secular obligations and duties demanded of me, less than if I had been insured to live fifty years more."[1]

II.

THE IDEAL DEATH.

1. "To die is gain." Paul is ready to welcome death, because he knows that it will usher him into the presence of Christ. "To die is gain," says Paul, and he defines this gain as being with Christ. In life we represent Christ, but in death we gain His companionship and presence. Paul gave up the things that were worldly gains to him for Christ, and suffered the loss of all things to gain Christ. Is it any wonder that he could face death with such a sublime hope? "And to die is gain." This is the only place in the New Testament where death is called a gain. The Apostle was in a strait betwixt life and death, and yet what a sublime confidence! He looked upon death as a means to an end, and the end was gain.

¶ "To die is *gain*." The eye of true life can see clear through the dispensation of dying, and behold the "gain"—can see straight through the troubled night of the final act of man upon earth, and gladden itself with the sight of the morning glory that falls for ever on the hills of heaven. To die is *mystery*; to die is *speculation*; to die is life's most desperate *venture*; to die is life's *annihilation*; this is the creed of those whose life is not centred in Christ.[2]

> The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
> And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
> From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
> She signs to come, and strife and song have been.

[1] Boswell's *Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides* (Napier's ed. 123).

[2] Joseph Parker.

A summer night descending, cool and green
And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And hopeful faces look upon and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene.[1]

¶ "Love and Death" is one of the best known, as it is one of the most finished, of Watts's paintings. In his prefatory note to the catalogue of the Winter Exhibition at the New Gallery in 1896, the artist said of it that it manifested "the progress of inevitable, but not terrible death, partially but not completely overshadowing love." These words exactly describe the conception. We see death as a gigantic female figure, mounting the steps and opening the door of a house where the tragedy of life is accomplishing itself, and the parting agonies within that are left to the imagination. Love is seen in the form of a winged youth, small in stature compared to death, but strong and resolute in endeavouring with all his might to prevent the entrance of death, but altogether in vain. With irresistible force he is swept out of the way, and his wings are bruised, and his form battered in the dread encounter. The bright roses that were growing round the doorway have fallen from their trellises, and are withering away unheeded on the ground. The problem of expressing harmoniously at the same time violent action and graceful attitude, attempted resistance and irresistible might, has been solved with wonderful success in these two typical figures.

Never did Grecian art express so graphically the hopelessness of human love to stay the step of death. The inequality of the contest could not possibly be represented to us in a more striking manner. It seems to be cruel, remorseless, inevitable Fate, the sight of which strikes us dumb. And yet there is wonderful consolation in the picture; a calmness, a sense of submission, before which the most passionate nature must yield itself. We yield to death, as we yield to nothing else. It rules us like a law of nature; and it stills our most desperate struggles. And on the drapery of the majestic figure of death, falling in such graceful folds around her person, there gleams a bright light from a hidden source, as if from another world out of sight, transfiguring the cerements of the grave. That light tells us of an unending day,

[1] W. E. Henley.

into which we shall enter as surely as on this earth of ours we pass into the region of the midnight sun. . . . There is nothing stern about death itself. She shows, by her very attitude in the dread struggle with love, how reluctantly she engages in it. That drooping head, that veiled face, that arm stretched out in tenderness as in might, are each expressive of her infinite pity. And though we cannot see in her face, for it is in shadow, the shadow cast on earth by the very glory that is to be revealed in us, we see her back illumined with a light that streams from the open door of heaven, and we trust her with our own life, and with what is dearer far; for she is the mother of our higher life, as Watts himself so touchingly called her, "that kind nurse who puts us all as her children to bed."[1]

This is the house of life, and at its door
Young Love keeps anxious watch, while outside stands
One who with firm importuning demands
An entrance. Strange is he, but love with lore
Taught by quick terror names him Death; and o'er
Love's face there comes a cloud, and the small hands
Would shut the door; for he from loveless lands
Is foe to Love, now and for evermore.

Nay, not for evermore! Love is but young,
And young Love sees alone what youth can see;
With age Love's vision grows more clear and strong,
And he discerns that this same Death, whom he
Had thought his foe, striving to do him wrong,
Comes with the gift of immortality.

2. Here is an utterance of faith, reached, not by reasoning from a creed, but by seeing the real outcome of God-given life. This life of union and fellowship with Christ is a power that death cannot destroy. If it is possible to live in the presence of Christ now, and work under His inspiration, then, behind the veil, there is the same possibility in a richer form. There is no attempt at an elaborate description of that other life; the life beyond as well as the life here is viewed in its essential spirit, not in its circumstances. Here, as elsewhere, Paul reminds us that we see through a glass darkly, and prophesy in part. But even in the dim light of the present the man who is really united

[1] Hugh Macmillan, *G. F. Watts*, 243.

to Christ can assert his deep intelligent conviction that neither life nor death can separate the loyal soul from the love of God.

¶ On one occasion when Jenny Lind, the celebrated singer, was recovering from a long and severe illness, she wrote to an author, thanking him for one of his books. "The passage," she said, "across to the other side appeared to me so easy and so beautiful; the true home above, after which I was longing, seemed so heavenly that everything earthly in me—all anguish, all grief, all the countless sufferings of a very sensitive soul, were hushed to rest. My soul was in such intimate communion with its Maker that it only longed to go home." Her desire was to go to be with Christ which is far better.

As I stand by the Cross, on the lone mountain's crest,
Looking over the ultimate sea,
In the gloom of the mountain a ship lies at rest,
And one sails away from the lea;
One spreads its white wings on the far-reaching track,
With pennant and sheet flowing free;
One hides in the shadow with sails laid a-back,
The ship that is waiting for me.

But lo! in the distance the clouds break away,
The gate's glowing portals I see,
And I hear from the outgoing ship in the bay
The song of the sailors in glee.
So I think of the luminous footprints that bore
The comfort o'er dark Galilee,
And wait for the signal to go to the shore
To the ship that is waiting for me.[1]

3. The fact that Christ is alive for evermore guarantees the permanence of all that is essential in our relation to Him. It secures that death, which had hitherto been looked upon as an absolute loss, shall only confirm and glorify that relationship, relieving it of all that is alien to its development, and providing it with the noblest sphere for its expression. In short, fellowship with Christ abolishes death. It lifts the soul into a region where its power to hurt is gone. The death which is loss is the issue of the life that is natural, but when that life is changed into Christ its issue undergoes a corresponding change, and the death

[1] Bret Harte.

into which it passes is no longer loss, but gain. When to live is Christ, to die is, so to speak, more Christ.

¶ For this man the Alps were tunnelled. There was no interruption in his progress. He would go, he believed, without "break of gauge," and would pass through the darkness, scarcely knowing when it came, and certainly unchecked for even a moment, right on to the other side where he would come out, as travellers to Italy do, to fairer plains and bluer skies, to richer harvests and a warmer sun. No jolt, no pause, no momentary suspension of consciousness, no reversal, nor even interruption in his activity, did Paul expect death to bring him, but only continuance and increase of all that was essential to his life.[1]

¶ If we live for Christ, Christ lives for us; and if Christ lives for us, Christ will see to it that the world into which death ushers us shall be in harmony with our highest needs and capabilities. The life which is Christ has in it not only the seed of eternity, but also the seed of perfection; and it were assuredly a strange thing if He who gives it such capability should not bring it to ripeness and realization when it passes into the world where there is no sin, where He reigns without a rival. He is the guarantee that a life which is His shall close with a death that is gain.[2]

¶ A few years since the Metropolitan Railway ended at Moorgate Street; there came an extension to Aldgate; and forthwith Moorgate Street was abolished as a terminus, but remained as a station. So the terminal character of death is abolished by Christ, a line is added stretching into infinity and terminating in the many mansions of our Father's House, and death becomes forthwith simply a starting-point for the pilgrims journeying to the glories and joys of the Divine Home. To Paul, death is, therefore, no actual break in the continuity of his life, but merely a station at which there is a momentary halt in his eternal progress.[3]

4. For those to whom to live is Christ, death is the gate to ampler powers and a wider ministry. Our life, transferred into a region where everything is congenial to its exercise and growth, clothed in due season with a new and perfect body, which will give the amplest expression to all its powers, a body like unto Christ's glorious body will develop freely and without restraint.

[1] A Maclaren, in *The Sunday Magazine*, 1884, p. 429.
[2] Principal D. W. Simon. [3] J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, 194.

In short, death will lead to the perfection of our identity with Him, bringing about the end of that which is here begun. Hope will change into fruition. Desire will be satisfied. The painful, humbling disproportion between the will to do and the power to accomplish will pass away, for the stature of the perfect man shall then have been reached. All the faculties and powers we possess will be turned into harmony, and that harmony will be Christ.

¶ Professor Wundt, in his *System of Philosophy*, has formulated a law of the universe which he calls the law of increase of spiritual energy, and which he expressly opposes to the law of conservation of energy in physical things. There seems no formal limit to the positive increase of being in spiritual respects; and since spiritual being, whenever it comes, affirms itself, expands and craves continuance, we may justly and literally say, regardless of the defects of our own private sympathy, that the supply of individual life in the universe can never possibly, however immeasurable it may become, exceed the demand. The demand for that supply is there the moment the supply itself comes into being, for the beings supplied demand their own continuance. I speak from the point of view of all the other individual beings, realizing and enjoying inwardly their own existence. If we are Pantheists, we can stop there. We need, then, only say that through them, as through so many diversified channels of expression, the eternal Spirit of the Universe affirms and realizes its own infinite life. But if we are Theists, we can go farther without altering the result. God, we can then say, has so inexhaustible a capacity for love that His call and need is for a literally endless accumulation of created lives. He can never faint or grow weary, as we should, under the increasing supply. His scale is infinite in all things. His sympathy can never know satiety or glut.[1]

¶ The sense in which men rest from their labours while their works follow them is surely not the sense in which human beings fall asleep in glad fatigue with a feeling upon their hearts of having earned their rest, for that would imply a cessation rather than an expansion of life—a long night of half-conscious or unconscious repose, instead of a great increase of Divine power. It seems almost monstrous to regard the initiation into Divine life as implying a cessation of all that we most closely associate with life here, as the happy trance of languid ecstasy instead of the new glow of creative vigour. Clearly, the "beatific vision" must

[1] William James, *Human Immortality*, 80.

there, as here, be the vision which makes happy; and the vision which makes us happiest is never a vision of indolent contemplativeness, but a vision to which we lend all our powers and all our vitality. It is, in fact, a vision in which the will is as much alive as the intellect, the sympathies as the imagination; in which the whole nature springs into a new vividness of activity as well as insight. The ordinary anticipation of the blessedness of the future is of a kind of happy trance. But a trance is not the fulness of life, rather, on the contrary, a kind of half-death, half-life, in which the mind catches a glimpse of something beyond the verge of its ordinary horizon. Heaven, we may be sure, produces, not a trance but a steady growth in the knowledge of God; and growth in the knowledge of Him whose very Sabbath of rest is glad work still, cannot be mere contemplation. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," said our Lord, when justifying on the Sabbath the restoration of power to the paralytic. And the "beatific vision," however free it may be from the sense of exhaustion, which really means the inadequacy of our powers to the work they have to do, can certainly never be free from the sense of growing life and strength and of that Divine energy which we call creative.[1]

¶ The effort to prove that there is a life beyond the grave is sometimes spoken of as *selfish*, by the very men who declare themselves most eager to promote the terrestrial welfare of their fellows. It is hard to say why it should be philanthropic to desire the lesser boon for mankind, and selfish to desire the greater; unless, indeed, the genuine philanthropist is forbidden to aim at any common benefit in which he himself may expect to share. In reality, this confusion of mind has a deeper source; it is a vestige of the old monkish belief that man's welfare in the next world was something in itself idle and personal, and was to be attained by means inconsistent with man's welfare in this. Whether Christianity ever authorized such a notion I do not now inquire. It is certain, at any rate, that Science will never authorize it. We are making as safe a deduction from world-wide analogy as man can ever make regarding things thus unknown when we assume that spiritual evolution will follow the same laws as physical evolution; that there will be no discontinuity between terrene and post-terrene bliss or virtue, and that the next life, like this, will "resemble wrestling rather than dancing," and will find its best delight in the possibility of progress, not attainable without effort so strenuous as may well resemble pain.

[1] R. H. Hutton, *Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought*, 413.

There will, no doubt, in such a quest, be an element of personal hope as well; but man, after all, must desire something, and what better can he desire? There is little danger, I think, that, with eyes fixed on so great a prospect, he should sink into a self-absorption which forgets his kind. Rather, perhaps, the race of man itself may sometimes seem to him but a little thing in comparison with the majesty of that spiritual universe into whose intimate structure it may thus, and thus only, be possible to project one penetrating ray. Yet we ourselves are a part, not only of the race, but of the universe. It is conceivable that our share in its fortunes may be more abiding than we know; that our evolution may be not planetary but cosmical, and our destiny without an end. "Major agit deus, atque opera in majora remittit."[1]

5. If life be not Christ, death is loss. For the worldly and selfish man has, no doubt, something here. The world has interests as well as Christ. The world's interests are many. There are almost as many interests in the world as men. One is interested in a book. Another's interest is in games. Then men are interested in politics, in merchandise, in science, in fashion, in work. There is hardly anything so small that it will not interest some one. Is this wrong? Far from it. It is right. How shall any one do well in anything unless he is interested in it? He who teaches history well is the one who is interested in history. So far, so good; but not enough. For all these things perish with the using. And when death comes, in an instant they are all gone to the dead. So, then, death is loss. The world as world has little of Christ in it. But there is worse still. If the world has little of Christ, hell has less. And, therefore, one well said of old, "This was the worst part of hell, no Christ."

¶ Before Christ's coming the Tuscans made their tombs face the West, for death meant to them the close of life's day and the passing into eternal night. After Christ's coming the tombs face the East, for the Easter day had come with its radiant promise, bringing life and immortality to light. In this changed attitude is the secret of that overwhelming joy which Christianity brought into the world. It threw "a light upon the mountain-tops of death, which made them lovely." The same vivid contrast is to be found in the Catacombs. In one chamber, which dates back to the time of Julius Cæsar, the tombs are marked with all the

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *Science and a Future Life.*

signs of pagan gloom and hopelessness. The inscriptions are either cynical at the expense of the gods, or embittered in their complaints. Hard by is a chamber where are buried those who suffered the extremities of persecution at the hands of men—martyrs who were burned, or crucified, or sawn asunder, or thrown to the beasts. But here there is no gloom; lilies adorn the tombs expressive of immortality; the inscriptions express a serene joy; the whole chamber is decked as if for marriage rather than for death, and the spirit pervading it is a gladness that excludes all sorrow. And that which created this was the conscious presence of the living Christ, and the present participation of His followers in the joy set before them.[1]

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear is a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest![2]

[1] J. Burns, *Illustrations from Art* (1912), 29.
[2] Browning, "Prospice" (*Poetical Works*, i. 599).

Work Out Your Own Salvation.

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WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

FROM the beginning the treatment of St. Paul by the Philippian Church was worthy of all praise. They received him as the ambassador of Christ, and listened to him as the oracle of God. Their care of him had abounded, and in all his trials he enjoyed their full sympathy. He presumes on that cordial relationship in addressing them on the subject of Church unity. Old memories stir up old emotions, and he would, through the old love, repossess their hearts. They had not only obeyed the truth as the foundation of their religious life, but they had obeyed the Apostle in matters of Church government. This indeed was to be expected while the Apostle was with them, for his presence would carry weight; but the Philippian Christians had obeyed even more fully in his absence. This afforded the greater proof of their love for him. The letter which he was now writing would supply his place, and contain the many counsels which he personally might administer.

It is not well to be always under the influence of a commanding personality. The weaker will may come to be dominated by the stronger, and the cultivation of our own judgment and character may be neglected. Against this danger the Apostle utters a warning. He exhorts the Christians at Philippi to self-reliance. Do not, he says, depend upon me. Work out your own salvation—not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. In depending upon yourselves you are depending upon God, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.

¶ I have sometimes seen melancholy instances of religious partnerships dissolved. When certain associations have been

broken up, and the man who, without knowing it, was living on, and kept alive by, the high-seasoned food of meetings, conferences, etc., has, like Philip, been called away from animating, bustling scenes, to go unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert—I have seen such a one languish as if that God whom he thought he loved, and that Saviour for whom he thought he had given up all, were confined to the little society, and located in the spot from which he had been severed; so that the heathen well might say, Where is now thy God? It is to save them from this snare that the Apostle presses the Philippians to work out, each man for himself, his own salvation; to cultivate, each man for himself, a religion which connects him, individually and apart from all others, with his God.[1]

¶ The truth is that men are apt to look (1) in edifices of wood and stone, (2) in great and ancient institutions, for that perfection which, if it can be found at all on earth, is to be sought in the lives of individuals. The true temple of God is the heart of man, and there the image of Christ may be renewed again and again, and effaced again and again. Neither is there any limit to the perfection which is attainable by any one of us, for Christ says: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But there is a limit to the perfection of outward institutions. These seem to be at their best when the goodness or genius of some one or two men has inspired them. . . . All institutions flourish when they are ordered by men who have great aims, who understand their true character; and know how to derive a strength from them, and to impart a strength of their own to them. They are not mere abstractions, but communities of living beings; and a common spirit or soul animates them. And sometimes they fall into corruption and decay; their schools and churches are unroofed, their very stones are carted away, and there is nothing to indicate the place where they once stood.[2]

I.

The Great Achievement of Life.

"Your own salvation."

1. One of Paul's fundamental doctrines is this, that *salvation is a free gift*, due to the grace of God. In this Epistle he is addressing, not unbelievers, but "saints," and the salvation he

[1] H. Woodward, *Sermons*, 450. [2] B. Jowett, *Miscellaneous Sermons*, 285.

speaks of is something they already possess. Salvation is of God as respects supreme agency, while our part in it is merely instrumental and subordinate. The satisfaction Christ has afforded to the law of God in the room of the ungodly is the whole ground of our acceptance with Him. We are pardoned and blessed only for His substitutionary and perfect righteousness, and this one consideration interdicts all boasting: for if we have paid none of the price how can we have any of the merit? But we find from this passage that the intervention of Godhead in the work of our salvation does not terminate with the coming or the dying of Christ. God, the Holy Spirit, still works in us, enabling us to believe the Gospel, and purifying our hearts by faith. He does not, however, work apart from us; far less, by physical force, does He control and compel. He is a "free Spirit" Himself, and He preserves to us a moral freedom, not superseding our faculties but qualifying them for rational exercise, showing us the truth and reforming us by its influence. But in all this we are occupied. He works in us, or, as the words may import, by us; and as long as our own powers are denied Him for implements of agency He is not working savingly in us at all.

¶ It is an interesting fact that in all the versions of the New Testament, which were composed in different dialects of the language spoken by our Lord, the word "salvation" is almost always rendered by a word which signifies "life," and the verb "to save" by the verb "to impart life," or "to restore to life and health." Only a few times is a verb used which means "to rescue" or "deliver." This seems to justify us in the belief that in the mind of our Lord, and also of the Apostle Paul, the thought of a new and higher life was present in many of the instances where the Greek word "salvation" is employed; and we are justified in assigning to the word "salvation," more frequently, perhaps, than has been our wont, the idea of "participation in the life and character of God."[1]

¶ Here is a slave who is set to work out his own freedom. He may have encouragements. His master may even give him assistance. But his freedom is to be the reward of his own exertions. He will pay for it by his own toil. He will work it out in the sense of securing it as the wages of years of labour. If this were the sense in which we are to work out our salvation,

[1] J. T. Marshall.

it would be obvious that we have a hard task upon our hands, and that if ever we gain freedom we shall have good reason to compliment ourselves.

But let us suppose the case of a slave emancipated by his master, given his full liberty at once; and then directed, both for the sake of gratitude to his liberator and for the sake of his own self-development, to prove himself worthy of freedom. He, too, is now to work out his liberty: not, however, in the sense of procuring it, but in the sense of bringing out that which is in it, of using it well, of applying himself so as to enjoy his new privileges. He is to prove himself really free by manifesting self-control; by securing employment and culture; by making his own the blessings and the prerogatives of freedom. Legally free, he is to work out a freeman's life, that he may manifest to others and himself enjoy both the rights and the duties which pertain to his new condition.

This latter case illustrates the sense in which we are to work out our salvation. We may have it at once by faith in Christ Jesus. No one teaches this more plainly than Paul. Jesus secured our needed emancipation. We are free from condemnation. We have passed from death unto life. We are no more the possession of Satan, but the accepted children of God. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and our first need is to realize, in all its wonderful meaning, the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Having this possession, we are to work it out to its consummation. Having it legally, we are to work it out practically. Having it in the germ, we are to work out in our lives all its tendencies and consequences.[1]

2. *Salvation, though due to God, is a process that we must work out.*—The Bible teaches immediate justification for Christ's sake. But it is important to add that the Bible insists with equal force that the salvation which is made legally ours we are to work out; the liberty which has been declared to be ours we are to exercise both as to its privileges and its duties; the acquittal which we have received we are to make a real and personal deliverance from the actual bondage of sin. It is only on the supposition that the formal will thus become the real that it is permitted. It is only on the supposition and certainty of our becoming like Christ that we are allowed to know that in Christ we are saved.

¶ Our first and most important religious act is the signing of a declaration of dependence. We need to recognize our relation to

[1] G. T. Purves, *Faith and Life*, 142.

God, to see that He is the source of all good, and that without Him we can do nothing. But we are not to be mystics, folding our hands and leaving everything to God. He has made us reasoning and voluntary beings, and when He works in us, He only puts us in more complete possession of our powers of intellect and will. Our declaration of dependence needs to be followed by a declaration of independence. We must see to it that we become co-workers with God and not mere puppets moved by the Divine fingers. The true Christian is more of a man than he ever was before, and while God works in him, he is also to work out his own salvation.[1]

¶ A little seed, says a German fable, began suddenly to give signs of life, and it shot up through the hard crust of the earth, and it spread forth its roots, rejoicing in the pleasant sunshine, crying aloud in its joy, "Am I not a tree?" But a voice came floating by which said, "The wind shall rock thee, and great storms tear thy very roots, and the winter's frost shall bite thee, and many winters and summers pass over thee as the years roll along, ere thou canst call thyself a tree." It is a fable not without application. It is not enough that we feel called to a higher and a better life, and that we perhaps suddenly burst the bonds that hold us to the past, and rejoice in the inherent and everlasting love of God. There must be patient growth and development of character—working out our own salvation.[2]

Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done;—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

Oh the regret, the struggle and the failing!
Oh the days desolate and useless years!
Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing!
Stings of my shame and passion of my tears![3]

3. *Salvation is a personal matter.*—It is "our own salvation." No one can work it out for us. Each one is to work out his salvation for himself. Each one stands in an individual relation to Christ. Each one has individually believed and individually lives. And so, individually, we are to weave into the fabric of our own lives, as that grows with the years, the pattern which God

[1] A. H. Strong, *Miscellanies*, ii. 129.
[2] J. Cameron Lees.
[3] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul.*

has given us; we are each to work it out, as the skilled workman may work out in wood or metal the idea which lies already fully formed within his mind. We are not to work for life, but, as it were, from life, as being those who already have it and who are resolved, by Divine grace, to experience all that life implies. Just as God Himself works out in the history of creation His primeval thought, that thought which before the first creative word was uttered already embraced in itself every moment of history, and every atom of existence, so are we in the sphere of Christ Jesus, in whom potentially we have all things, to work Christ out with fear and trembling into the actual being, thought and character of our souls.

Salvation must be personal for the all-important reason that sin is personal. We have each chosen our own way. And God loves men in their individual capacity. This individuality must never be lost sight of, and our own private and personal interest in the events of Calvary must be ever present to our minds. Grand as is the doctrine of a universal atonement, yet to the man who has never proved his interest therein the contemplation can afford no real peace, no abiding joy. It is only as he cuts himself out of the mass, and realizes his own personal and specific relations to God in Christ, that he can share in the consciousness of His definite presence and delivering power.

¶ We can never dismiss from memory the sadness with which we once listened to the confession of a certain foreign professor: "I used to be concerned about religion," he said in substance, "but religion is a great subject. I was very busy; there was little time to settle it for myself. A Protestant, my attention was called to the Roman Catholic religion. It suited my case. And instead of dabbling in religion for myself, I put myself in its hands." "Once a year," he concluded, "I go to Mass." These were the words of one whose work will live in the history of his country, one, too, who knew all about parasitism. Yet, though he thought it not, this is parasitism in its worst and most degrading form.[1]

¶ Nothing is of value unless it is individualized. For example, light is universal. It bathes the whole round world in living splendour; but each individual optic nerve must take up its own set of vibrations, and convey them to the interpreting consciousness, or we shall have no sense of form, or colour, or perspective

[1] Henry Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.*

or proportion. The world is full of harmonious sounds, the singing of birds, the multitudinous laughter of the waves, and the sighing of the summer wind through the fragrant pines; but unless each individual auditory nerve gathers up these waves of sound and carries them into the appreciating brain, the orchestra of Nature might as well be silent as the grave. The same is true of air. It is universal. It wraps the whole world round with miles of thickness. There is enough for millions more than tread the earth to-day; but unless each individual pair of lungs operates upon it, and puts in its claim for supplies, it might as well be in a vacuum. Here, for example, we rescue a drowning man. He is laid upon the bank. We know how to render first-aid, and we proceed to induce artificial respiration. "What is wrong?" a bystander asks. We say, "The man cannot breathe." "Is there not enough air?" he asks. "Yes," we reply, "plenty of air. Miles of air, air pressing with the weight of nearly fifteen pounds upon every square inch of him; but unless he can be made to draw upon it, his life will be a vanishing spark." So with salvation. It is as free as air. It folds us round like the atmosphere. It has a positive pressure. It whispers, it woos and waits, it feels round the door of the heart, and listens, and longs for entrance; but unless it be personally admitted, all its universality will count for nought.[1]

¶ It is a great moment in any man's history when he first of all grasps his own real and separate selfhood. To some men this comes suddenly with a great revealing flash that pales the brow and arrests the pulse, and smites the soul with speechless awe. To other men it comes gradually, like the dawning of the day. Tennyson has beautifully described the latter process—

> The baby new to earth and sky,
> What time his tender palm is prest
> Against the circle of the breast,
> Has never thought that "this is I."
>
> But as he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
> And finds "I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch."
>
> So rounds he to a separate mind
> From whence clear memory may begin,
> As thro' the frame that binds him in
> His isolation grows defined.

[1] H. Howard, *The Summits of the Soul*, 180.

II.

The Spirit that Befits the High Enterprise.

"Fear and trembling."

1. This fear does not mean mistrust or doubt, which would keep the mind in a continual apprehension of falling short of salvation, but a distrust of ourselves from a consciousness of our own weakness, and of the obstacles in the way, which produces an anxious solicitude to use all the means necessary to salvation. And trembling here denotes self-abasement in the Divine presence, a holy reverence of God, originating in the conviction of our absolute dependence upon Him for that grace which worketh salvation. The one is a warning against carnal confidence, which, if indulged, would lead to the disuse of the means of salvation; and the other an admonition against vain presumption, which would lead to dependence upon self-endeavour for salvation. What is here recommended is assurance without spiritual security, and labour without spiritual pride; and this meets the case both of those who undervalue and of those who overvalue human agency in the work of salvation.

¶ Did you ever have committed to your care something exceedingly rare and precious; something of singular beauty or untold value? Did you ever come into the possession of something long and ardently desired, which you had thought to be too good, too sweet, too lovable ever to be really yours, your very own? Was there not an awe, almost a terror, in the sense of that possession? Did you not say to yourself, "Who am I that I should have this? What if I should let it drop? What if I should lose it?" Did not the very joy make you "afraid" and your happiness make you "tremble"?[1]

¶ An eminent French surgeon used to say to his students when they were engaged in difficult and delicate operations, in which coolness and firmness were needed, "Gentlemen, don't be in a hurry, for there's no time to lose." Time to make that incision once and well in the vital place, not time to dash at it with overconfidence.[2]

[1] J. Vaughan.

[2] J. McNeill, *Regent Square Pulpit*, i. 125.

¶ As a young man Dr. A. A. Hodge was Professor Joseph Henry's assistant in making his experiments. He says: "I can well remember the wonderful care with which he arranged all his principal experiments. Then often, when the testing moment came, that holy as well as great philosopher would raise his hand in adoring reverence and call upon me to uncover my head and worship in silence. 'Because,' he said, 'God is here: I am about to ask God a question.'" Surely that was the right spirit of scientific inquiry—none the less exact for being religious—and it went upon the idea that God is working out in nature His own thought and plan. So, I say, truth is to be embodied—worked into the material of our lives: and the Christian, being once enlightened, is to work out his salvation with fear and trembling.[1]

2. This fear is a rational and salutary emotion. Here is a crowded concert-hall. In the midst of the performance, a messenger whispers to the conductor. He taps with his baton. In an instant the instruments are hushed, and the leader announces in a clear voice that a fire has just broken out in the building, and that, while there is no immediate danger it is advisable for the audience quietly but at once to withdraw. Here is every care taken to prevent panic, but at the same time every effort to inspire rational fear. It is unworthy of a man under such circumstances to be overcome with terror, but no one of all that audience feels that it is beneath him to fear. No man compromises his dignity or shows that he is a coward when he is "moved by fear" to save his life.

¶ Bishop Latimer once preached a sermon before King Henry VIII., which greatly offended his royal auditor by its plainness. The king ordered him to preach again the next Sabbath, and to make public apology for his offence. The bishop ascended the pulpit and read his text, and thus began his sermon: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty Monarch, the King's most excellent Majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But then, consider well, Hugh! Dost thou not know from whom thou comest—upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is all-present and beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully." And so beginning, he preached over again, but with increased energy, the self-same

[1] G. T. Purves, *Faith and Life*, 147.

sermon he had preached the week before. The fear of God delivered him from the fear of man.[1]

3. This fear means distrust of self with a desire to please God. There are two master principles of action which simultaneously claim our obedience—God's will and self-will. Between these two there is everlasting antagonism; eternal irreconcilableness. One of these must be renounced, agreeably to the Scripture maxim, "Ye cannot serve two masters," and the other must be chosen as the ruling principle of the life. In the case of those who are being sanctified this choice has been made, for they have learned that the wisdom of self-will worketh death; and they have elected to follow the counsel of the will of God as the only way of working out their own salvation. Now, this consecration to the will of God is practical holiness. Precisely in the same ratio that the conduct is coincident with the Divine will is the work of personal sanctification promoted. If we could come to have no will of our own, to lose our will in God's, we would have reached the highest moral perfection possible to a creature. And we must ever have our eye upon this as our loftiest aim and endeavour.

¶ Not the slavish fear which brings the spirit into bondage, but rather that modest, humble, sensitive spirit which yields to God as the quivering grass of the meadow yields to every breeze that sweeps over its waving wealth of stems; so the soul, in deep contrition before God, trembles lest it should be found doing its own will instead of the will of Him who has come to dwell in it. It is a holy fear lest we should mistake our will for His.

That I no more from Thee may part,
No more Thy goodness grieve;
The filial awe, the fleshy heart,
The tender conscience give.[2]

III.

The Twofold Agency Engaged in the Work.

"God worketh in you."

1. This virtually is what St. Paul says here: Work out your own salvation, for now the great impossibility has become possible;

[1] A. H. Strong, *Miscellanies*, ii. 185.
[2] E. W. Moore, *The Promised Rest*, 191.

God is working in you; this is no hopeless task to which I am calling you, no fruitless beating of the air, no idle effort of the leopard to change his spots or the Ethiopian to wash himself white. The Lord is working in you, and He is mighty to save. Whatever impulse you feel, whatever goodwill to this work, look upon it as a token of His presence and of His readiness to help you in it; that is God working in you both to will it and to do it, for He has no feeling but one of goodwill to you.

¶ I cannot for a moment believe that Paul called the Philippians to work because it was first of all necessary that God should work in them. But the import, the beauty, the comfort and the encouragement of this word will appear at a glance when you see that what the Apostle really says is, Work out your own salvation, for God is working in you both to will it, and to do it in His good will to you. That is the only meaning which the original can really bear. And when it is thus read the argument at once becomes clear, and the perplexity gives place to a feeling of relief and good hope. That God must needs work in us is, of course, taken for granted; but we are encouraged by the assurance that that is exactly what He is already doing.[1]

¶ Religion has been defined by an eminent scholar as "the recognition of the Infinite and Eternal with a view to the regulation of life"; and Jesus, the Divine Author of the only true and perfect form of religion, teaches us to recognize the Infinite and Eternal as a power which is equally active in the measureless abyss of the starry heavens and in the mysterious depths of the human soul. God is present and active everywhere. In Him all things subsist; in Him we live, move, and have our being; men and things are alike a revelation of His glory.[2]

¶ God cannot have intended any other end for man than the perfection fitted for a self-conscious being. But such perfection is realized in God Himself, and anything less than God must be condemned as imperfect in comparison with that ultimate standard. Consequently, to become even as God is must be the final destiny of man, and the goal towards which both the individual and the race are tending. Thus, Paracelsus declares that

> in completed man begins anew
> A tendency to God.

[1] Walter C. Smith.

[2] D. E. Irons, *A Faithful Ministry*, 192.

Rabbi Ben Ezra speaks of man as "a God though in the germ"; while the Pope, looking forward to his final state, sees him

> Creative and self-sacrificing too,
> And thus eventually God-like (ay
> "I have said ye are Gods"; shall it be said for nought?).

In *Fifine* the doctrine that the spirit shall return unto God that gave it, the finite being merged once more in the infinite spirit to which it is akin and from which it sprang, is put forward in more philosophical language:

> The individual soul works through the shows of sense,
> (Which, ever proving false, still promise to be true)
> Up to an outer soul as individual too;
> And, through the fleeting, lives to die into the fixed,
> And reach at length "God, man, or both together mixed."

The narrow limits of the individual self will at last be left behind, and the process of our life will culminate in the identification of thought, feeling, volition, action, of our very soul and being, with the thought and life of Him, of whom all other life is only the partial and imperfect manifestation.[1]

2. Two powers are at work, and the error lies in separating them. The two parts of the text, if taken separately, may lead to error. "Work." "God works." The truth lies in the synthesis of the two: Work, for God works. The fact that God works in us ought to be the incentive to our own activity. All life is supported by reciprocation—action and reaction. There must be activity in that which lives before the environment can act upon it.

The great religions of the East, Hinduism and Buddhism, lay all the stress upon the human will. The key-note of those systems is, "Work out your own salvation." The power that saves you is of yourself; the chains that bind you are of your own forging; the virtue that delivers you is of your own merit. There is no need to disparage this teaching for the sake of exalting our Christian religion. It is the noblest element in Eastern faith, and it is a truth too much neglected by ourselves. Will power is not so strong in human nature that we can afford to discourage its cultivation. There is something stern and grand in the conception of those who, instead of leaning upon others, or repining

[1] A. C. Pigou, *Browning as a Religious Teacher*, 64.

at their lot, frankly take all the condemnation to themselves, and strive manfully to retrieve their past and work out their own salvation. It is one side of religious truth, but it is not the whole truth, and it is not the gospel truth. It omits the good news of a Father's love, of the Saviour's Cross, and of the Holy Spirit that helpeth our infirmities. It is silent about those truths which are the most inspiring cause of human effort, and which have done more than all else to enkindle the heart, and strengthen the will towards right.

¶ These two streams of truth are like the rain-shower that falls upon the water-shed of a country. The one half flows down the one side of the everlasting hills, and the other down the other. Falling into rivers that water different continents, they at length find the sea, separated by the distance of half the globe. But the sea into which they fall is one, in every creek and channel. And so, the truth into which these two apparent opposites converge, is "the depth of the wisdom and the knowledge of God," whose ways are past finding out—the Author of all goodness, who, if we have any holy thought, has given it us; if we have any true desire, has implanted it; has given us the strength to do the right and to live in His fear; and who yet, doing all the willing and the doing, says to us, "Because I do everything, therefore let not *thy* will be paralysed, or *thy* hand palsied; but because I do everything, therefore will *thou* according to My will, and do *thou* according to My commandments!" [1]

¶ This is the profound teaching in St. Augustine's doctrine of grace, which he pressed so strongly as to seem at times almost to destroy the reality of free will. Man could not seek God unless God already possessed him. He possesses us that we may desire to possess Him. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as mere natural goodness. Whether it is recognized or not, all earnest thought and effort is God working in us.[2]

3. When we co-operate with God the antagonism vanishes. God and man are so near together, so belong to one another, that not a man by himself, but a man and God, is the true unit of being and power. The human will in such sympathetic submission to the Divine will that the Divine will may flow into it and fill it, and yet never destroy its individuality; my thoughts filled with the thought of One who, I know, is different from me while He

[1] A. Maclaren, *Sermons Preached in Manchester*, i. 219.
[2] H. Lefroy Yorke, *The Law of the Spirit*, 166.

is unspeakably close to me;—are not these the consciousnesses of which all souls that have been truly religious have been aware?

¶ There are two parts in every great work—a working in and a working out. The working in is always the Divine part. It is very easy to work out an idea when once you have got it; but the mystery is the getting of it. What is the mystery of the bee-hive? It is not the making of the hive; it is the conceiving of it. If you can tell me how the idea was worked *in*, I will tell you how the plan was worked out. The thing which wakes my wonder is the instinct—the process *within* the bee; I call it God's work. So it is with my soul. I, too, am helping to build a hive—a great home of humanity, named the Kingdom of God. I know not how it is done; I know not even what part of the building I am aiding to construct; I only know that an impulse of life moves me. That impulse is God working within me. Whither it tends I cannot see. The making of the hive eludes me. I am travelling through the night—carrying I know not what, to places I know not where. Only, the impulse says "go," and I do go; I work out what God works in. I cannot fathom His designs; He has inspired me to the work by designs less than His own. He sends me to chase a butterfly when He means me to win a kingdom. No matter, I work what I will not; I compass what I conceive not; I perform what I plan not. I do what is not in my dream by the very effort to fulfil it. I seek, like Abraham, a foreign country, and I find myself in the land of Canaan.[1]

¶ Rose leaves, placed within a vase, can influence the atmosphere of a room, creating an odour which is pleasing to the sense. Can the spirit of man, placed within its vase of clay, create a moral atmosphere which it will be healthful or injurious for others to breathe? Your mind has immediately given an affirmative answer. We cannot be in the presence of any man of great and holy force of character and not perceive his influence. How often one has heard a weaker man speak of a stronger man, and say, "As long as he is with me, I feel I can do everything I ought to do!" If you examine the expression you will find that it is a popular proof of the truth I am now enforcing, that one strong, dominant spirit can pervade a weaker one, and give to the weaker one a sense of confident and conquering might.

Now, let us lift up the argument to its highest application. If human spirit can work upon human spirit, and reinforce it by the impartation of its own strength, is it inconceivable that the

[1] G. Matheson, *Searchings in the Silence*, 213.

great Creative Spirit can work upon created spirit, and impart to it its own unspeakable strength? Do you detect anything in the assumption which is belittling or degrading to an august conception of God? The raindrop, hanging at the tip of a rose-leaf, depends by the same power as the largest star. And I am fain to believe, and rejoice in believing, that the ineffable spiritual energy which is implied in what we call the holiness of God, and which empowers seraph and archangel with endurance to bear the "burning bliss" of the Eternal Presence, will also communicate itself to the weakest among the sons of men, and so hold him in his appointed place as to make it impossible for him ever to be moved.[1]

O power to do! O baffled will!
O prayer and action! ye are one.[2]

4. God works in us both to will and to work *for His good pleasure.*

(1) What is this "good pleasure" of God towards man? Not that man should exist as a being endowed with reason, conscience, affection, and will, in merely elementary form, still less in the depraved and corrupted forms with which we are only too familiar. It is that human beings, endowed from the beginning with the germs of Power Divine, human beings now existing as weak, wayward, sinning, shame-stained children, should, through the manifold discipline of life, be educated, built up into all the power, wisdom, and moral beauty of a perfect manhood; that through sore trial, and deep suffering, and awful sacrifice, every heavenly faculty should be daily led forth into larger force and nobler firmness, every taint of moral weakness and impurity be gradually purged away, every virtue, every grace of the Christian character be quickened and ripened into fullest beauty in every human soul; that all the sons of men should become truly, fully, sons of God—each carrying on in his varied activity the very work of God, the Author of all life and beauty and joy; and each, in all his richly endowed humanity, standing forth before all worlds the image and the glory of the Eternal.

¶ The assurance that the righteous Creator can never cease to desire and urge the righteousness of His creature is the eternal hope for man, and the secure rest for the soul that apprehends it. For if this be His purpose for one, it must be His purpose for all.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *From Strength to Strength*, 20. [2] J. G. Whittier.

I believe that it is His purpose for all, and that He will persevere in it until it is accomplished in all.[1]

All things a prophecy contain
  Of something higher still;
A close relation all sustain,
  A place and purpose fill.

Our life on earth is incomplete;
  For larger life we plead;
Who made the heart, aspiring, beat
  Will answer to its need.

Beyond the bound of time and space
  A fairer world we see;
Within the soul of man we trace
  The sign and prophecy.

We trust the Lord in faith serene,
  A ladder He hath given;
The lower rounds on earth are seen,
  The higher reach to Heaven.[2]

(2) By God working in us "to will and to do," we are to understand that He makes us willing, and gives us power, who were formerly unwilling and unable, to surrender ourselves to the work of our own salvation. Nor is there involved in this any violation of the true liberty of the human will. The will is incapable of coercion. There can be no forcing of volition. The very freest act of the human soul is that by which it gives itself under God's grace to Himself. When God works in the soul "to will" there is no violence done to the rational nature. On the contrary, there is the fullest unison with the freedom and responsibility of the moral being. And so is it also when God works in us "to do." Our doing is not compulsory action. It is not a course of conduct to which we are forcibly driven, but one to which we are freely drawn. We are not like slaves, compelled by the lash to do what we have a repuguance to do. We are like freemen, influenced by grace to do what we have the inclination and resolve to do. Thus the carrying out of our salvation is willing action. But the will and the action, though *by us* as

[1] Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. [2] Thomas Brevior.

agents, are not *from us* in their motive cause. The will is wrought *in us* by God, and the action is wrought *by us*, as the instruments of the inworking agency of God.

¶ Feelings are given not merely to be enjoyed, but as motives of action. Professor James advises that we should not even listen to a concert without compelling ourselves to perform also some kind and considerate act for the sake of preserving the balance between feeling and will power. The law of life is: "This do, and thou shalt live." Feelings may ebb and flow, but right doing is always possible—

> We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire which in the heart resides,
> The spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides;
> But tasks, in hours of insight will'd,
> May be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

The Excellent Exchange.

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The Excellent Exchange.

Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.—Phil. iii. 7-9.

1. The Apostle indulges here in spiritual paradox. He speaks of losses that were gains, and of gains that were losses. And we shall understand him only if we remember that life is to be considered from two sides—from the outside and the inside, from the external and the internal, from the visible and the invisible, from the physical and the spiritual. He who comes to the Bible, more particularly the later portion of it, in order to understand it must see life as it does, must climb to its vantage ground, and breathe its bracing air. It is characteristic of the Word of God that it is always looking at life from the inside and not the outside, from the interior and not the exterior, from the invisible and not the visible, from the eternal and not the temporal, from the spiritual and not the physical. He, therefore, who would come to an adequate comprehension of the genius of the Word of God, and who would possess himself of the clues by which its spiritual paradoxes are to be rendered clear, must look at life through its eyes, and from its heights.

2. Notice, then, that this is not the utterance of youth, impassioned, and therefore hasty; sanguine of imagined good, and pouring out its prodigal applause. It is Paul, the man, who speaks, with ripened wisdom on his brow, and gathering around him the experience of years. It is Paul, the aged, who speaks, who is not ignorant of what he says, who has rejoiced in the

excellent knowledge through all the vicissitudes of a veteran's life, alike amid the misgivings of a Church and the perils of his journeys, alike when first worshipped and then stoned at Lystra, in the prison at Philippi, and in the Areopagus at Athens; alike when in the early council it strengthened him, "born out of due time," to withstand to the face Peter, the elder Apostle, because he was to be blamed, and when, melted into almost womanly tenderness on the seashore at Miletus, it nerved him for the heart-breaking of that sad farewell; alike when buffeting the wintry blasts of the Adriatic, and when standing, silver-haired and solitary, before the bar of Nero. It is he of amplest experience who has tried it under every conceivable circumstance of mortal lot, who, now that his eye has lost its early fire, and the spring and summer are gone from him, feels its genial glow in the kindly winter of his years. Where can we find testimony more conclusive and valuable?

I.

What Paul Renounced.

1. Paul gives a catalogue of the gains that once were his.

(1) They include, to begin with, inherited privileges. *First*: "circumcised the eighth day." His parents were neither heathen nor sons of Ishmael. He was not a proselyte, but a born Jew. *Second*: "of the stock of Israel." He was regularly descended from the founder of the race. "Are they Israelites? so am I." *Third*: "of the tribe of Benjamin." This was one of the most distinguished of the tribes. It was the tribe of the first king. It was the tribe which was alone faithful to Judah in the great division. *Fourth*: "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." Lightfoot says: "Many of those whose descent was unimpeachable and who inherited the faith of the Mosaic law, yet, as living among heathens, adopted the language and conformed to the customs of the people around them. Not so were the forefathers of Saul of Tarsus. There had been no Hellenist among them. They were all strict Hebrews from first to last." For Paul, therefore, to say that he was a strict Hebrew, or a Hebrew of Hebrews, was more than for him to say that he was an Israelite. The Hebrew was

of the inner circle of the Israelites. These were the inherited privileges of the Apostle.

(2) He proceeds to enumerate certain other privileges which depended on his own personal choice and activity. *First*: "as touching the law, a Pharisee." This was as much as to say that he attached himself to the party which was most scrupulous in its ritualistic observances. Possibly he meant to say more than this; but this much it is quite certain he intended to affirm. *Second*: "as touching zeal, persecuting the Church." No man of the Jewish faith had been more determined and energetic in his opposition to the new way. *Third*: "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." There was nothing more for him to do than he had done to make his righteousness as prescribed by the law complete. But he was careful to insert the words "which is in the law," for he had come to have a new view of righteousness, a view reaching down far deeper and rising far higher than any he had ever known till he found it in Christ. But according to his former standard and method of righteousness he was "blameless."

¶ It is with the Christian life as with the block of marble out of which the artist calls the statue. The first blow of the hammer and chisel will take off a rough, rude block of marble. The next will remove similar fragments; but as the image advances to perfection, only powdered dust flies with each stroke, which is shaping the perfect conception into actual form. At the beginning there are multitudes of things which the believer recognizes that he must count loss, but afterwards he discovers renewed evidences of dissimilarity and incongruity, which must be removed if he is to be brought into the likeness of his Lord.[1]

¶ Paul renounces not only sin, and all self-righteousness, but privileges, gifts and capacities, in order to possess himself of the supreme treasure. It is not enough that, when once you are truly converted, you have the earnest desire to have all these devoted to the service of the Lord. The desire is good, but can neither teach the way nor give the strength to do it acceptably. Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and

[1] S. H. Tyng.

surrender. When Christ has accepted them, and set His stamp upon them, we receive them back, to hold them as His property, to wait on Him for the grace to use them aright.[1]

2. Now, the things that Paul renounced were not without intrinsic value. There is something remarkable in the way in which the Apostle refers to the past, and the respectful manner in which he speaks of the faith of his fathers, and of his youth. It is often a sign rather of servility than of independence, when men vilify their former selves. The Apostle had not renounced Judaism in any moment of passion, or in any prejudice of novelty. Strong convictions had forced him out of his old belief. He had emerged into a faith purer and far more satisfying. But there were memories connected with the fulfilled dispensation which he would not willingly let die. There were phases of his own inner life there. For long years Judaism had been to him his only interpreter of the Divine, the only thing that met a religious instinct active beyond that of ordinary men. The grounds of trust which he now found to be insufficient had been the halting-places of his soul in its progress from the delusive to the abiding, from the shadowy to the true. He could not forget that there hung around the system he had abandoned an ancient and traditional glow. It was of God's own architecture; the pattern and its gorgeous ceremonial had been given by Himself in the mount; all its furniture spoke of Him in sensuous manifestation and magnificent appeal. His breath had quivered upon the lips of its prophets, and had lashed its seers into their sacred frenzy. He was in its temple service, and in its holy of holies; amid shapes of heavenly sculpture, the light of His presence ever rested in merciful repose. How could the Apostle assail it with wanton outrage or flippant sarcasm? True, it had fulfilled its mission, and now that the age of spirituality and power had come, it was no longer needed; but the halo was yet upon its brow and, like the light which lingers above the horizon long after the setting of the sun, there shone about it a dim but heavenly splendour. While, however, the Apostle was not slow to confess that there was glory in that which was to be done away, he was equally bold in affirming its absolute worthlessness in comparison with the yet

[1] A. Murray, *Abide in Christ*, 115.

greater glory of that which remained—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

¶ As the painter rubs off half of his gold leaf ere the letters which he is painting on the sign-board appear distinctly—so, much of what is precious in life has to be taken away ere God's glory is fulfilled in us, and our title as Christ's disciples is made manifest.[1]

¶ Gregory Nazianzen, a foremost Father of the Christian Church, rejoiced that he was well versed in the Athenian philosophy; and why do you think he rejoiced in that? Because he had to give it all up when he became a Christian; and, said he, "I thank God that I had a philosophy to throw away."[2]

3. The most precious things have no value compared with Christ. The things which Paul declares to be loss are the very things which, before he attained to the knowledge of Christ, he esteemed to be the most precious, and which were truly so—righteousness according to the Law, and the various things which constitute that righteousness. This righteousness, before Christ came into the world, was the most precious thing in the world; and could it ever have been true and perfect, it would have been precious, not only in the sight of man, but of God. Seeing, however, that it never had been perfect,—seeing that from the frailty of human nature it never could be otherwise than very imperfect,—seeing that the pursuit of it led men to magnify themselves, and drew them away from Him who alone could give them what they were seeking, a righteousness acceptable in the sight of God,—this too is declared by the Apostle to be loss. So too is it still loss, when men strive after moral excellence by following the laws of their own reason, instead of seeking that excellence in the only way in which we can really attain to it, by a living communion with the Spirit of Christ. For this is the only way to real moral excellence. All other ways lead us far from it. For all other ways lead us to exalt ourselves, to glorify our own understanding, to magnify our own will; and here also it holds as a never-failing truth, that he who exalts himself shall be abased.

¶ It would be a positive loss if a man were to shut up his windows and to go on working by candle-light when the sun is riding through the sky. It would be a loss if, instead of receiving

[1] Hugh Macmillan. [2] C. H. Spurgeon.

good sterling money for the wages of your labour, you were to receive false money. It would be a loss if, when by going to the right you might have picked up a fine diamond, or other precious stone, you had unluckily turned to the left, and brought home nothing but dirt and frippery. So is it a loss if, when God has shown forth all His goodness and mercy in Christ, we turn away from Christ and give ourselves up to the pursuit and love of the creature. It is a loss if we persist in creeping and crawling along amid the things of the earth, when Christ has sent His spirit to bear our hearts and souls up to heaven.[1]

¶ If we were truly to desire Christ to abide always with us, He would never go away. What a life of benediction and joy we should live if He were indeed always with us! Unbroken communion with Him would hold heaven close about us all the while, and thus these sordid earthly lives of ours would be permeated and struck through with the sweetness and fragrance of holiness, and transformed into the likeness of Christ Himself. Then all life's experiences would be transfigured. Joy would be purer, and even sorrow would be illumined. All through life this should be our continual prayer; then in death our earthly communion shall brighten into heavenly glory.[2]

For us,—whatever's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done.
Grief may be joy misunderstood;
Only the Good discerns the good.
I trust Thee while my days go on.

Whatever's lost, it first was won;
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show more clear.
I praise Thee while my days go on.

I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on:
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.[3]

[1] J. C. Hare. [2] J. R. Miller.
[3] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "De Profundis."

II.

What Paul Gained.

1. The Apostle sums up his gain in one word—Christ. But he would not have us suppose that his renunciation was such as to merit or purchase for him the one gain. Jesus Christ is God's gift. He can never be bought. St. Paul was already a believer, and the Lord Jesus Christ was already his portion when he wrote these words. They are very ill-instructed in the mind of God, and only blind leaders of the blind, who urge souls to give up this, that, or the other as the price of receiving Christ. Such teaching reverses God's order. The dropping off, the giving up, the counting as loss all the old "gains," follows, but never precedes, the folding to the heart of the one gain.

¶ In Wales and in Scotland, in the mining districts, "winning" the coal, or the mineral, is a common expression, by which is meant sinking a shaft deep down to get out the ore in richer abundance. Let us take that idea. Paul, on the day when he first discovered Christ, found himself to be the possessor of a large estate. He was standing, so to speak, at the opening of this mine, and he saw some of the precious ore. He could not take his eye off what he did see; but, the more he looked, the more he discovered of the inexhaustible riches there. He had only to dig down, to sink his shaft in all directions, and there was no end to what he might bring up out of this mine; and so it was his lifetime's wish, "that I may win Christ." When he had got some of this ore, he was inflamed with a desire to get more. He would stand amid the heaps of his gold and say, "That I may win Christ."[1]

¶ At Kurnalpi I took my lamp and went to the place of meeting. A gentleman had offered me his auctioneer's box as a pulpit. I fixed my lamp beside me in the box so that I could read by its light. When I mounted the pulpit, there was not a soul about me that I could see in the darkness, so first lifting my heart for a moment to my Master, I next lifted my voice and shouted "Gentlemen, the sale is about to commence!" You should have seen the response. They came running out from everywhere, like ants from an ant-hill, and rushed to get a good

[1] Andrew Bonar.

place near the auctioneer. There was a billiard saloon not far away, and though it was crowded a little ago, it was emptied quicker than it takes me to tell about it. Soon I had between two hundred and three hundred men around me. In my travel during the day I had learnt something of the open, unblushing sin prevailing here, and as I reasoned of righteousness and judgment, the Power of God fell on those men. This was my pioneer gospel service. I had ridden hard and far to tell them of the Water for which they would not have to pay, but which they might have for the taking, and without which they would perish miserably. I was selling Gospel necessaries—"Water," and Gospel luxuries—"Wine and Milk," without money and without price. Many of them were incredulous, and not inclined to buy at my price. Herein lay the difference between the auctioneer who usually occupied that box, and myself, its present occupant. "He has hard work to get you up to his price," I told them, "But I have hard work to get you down to mine."[1]

2. Paul specifies as among his gains "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." The phrase employed combines two ideas. In the first place, Paul felt Christ appealing to him as to a thinking, knowing being. Various influences were reaching him from Christ which bore on heart, will, conscience; but they all came primarily as a revelation, they came as light. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In the next place, this discovery came with a certain assuredness. It was felt to be not a dream, not a fair imagination only, not speculation, but knowledge. Here Paul felt himself face to face with the real, indeed with fundamental, reality. In this character, as luminous knowledge, the revelation of Christ challenged his decision, it demanded his appreciation and adherence. For since Christ claims so fundamental a place in the moral world, since He claims so intimate and fruitful a relation to the whole state and prospects of the believing man, acquaintance with Him (at least, if it be acquaintance in Paul's style) cannot pause at the stage of contemplation; it passes into appropriation and surrender. Christ is known as dealing with us, and must be dealt with by us. So this knowledge becomes, at the same time, experience.

[1] *John MacNeil, Evangelist in Australia*, 272.

¶ Knowledge is often more valuable than temporal possessions. A man falling into the sea might find a knowledge of the art of swimming of more value to him than a good balance in his favour at the bank. So the knowledge of Christ is of more value to men than temporal possessions of any kind. The knowledge of Christ is *saving* knowledge. Sinners cannot know Him unless they know Him as their Saviour. This knowledge is, moreover, *sanctifying* knowledge. To know Christ is to know the experience of holiness. This knowledge affects the whole being of those who have it, and from such knowledge all that is best in history has sprung.[1]

3. The knowledge of Christ creates obedience, and evokes endurance.

(1) *The knowledge of Christ creates obedience.*—Paul calls the Christ he knows so well "my Lord." No man ever yet had a believing acquaintance with Christ, except as "Lord." To trust Christ and to live Christ is to obey Christ. "My Lord" is a loved title by which the Christian believer designates Christ. They who know Christ ever obey Him. He becomes the Ruler of their life. And the more they know Him, they the more absolutely obey Him.

¶ If we obey Christ, His commandments will soon shine in their own light. "He that *followeth* me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It is not by mere meditation that we come to see the real beauty and excellence of Christ's commandments; we must obey them before we see how beautiful and noble they are. We must actually *follow* Christ if we desire to have "the light of life"; if we decline to follow Him till the "light" comes, we shall remain in darkness.[2]

(2) *The knowledge of Christ evokes endurance.*—See how graphically this is exemplified in Paul's own case. It might be easy to affirm that all things pale before the knowledge of Christ. But Paul had given abundant proof of his faith. He had lived out his strong conviction. He had proved his creed by deed; his tremendous creed by sacrificial deed. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things."

The figure is a very striking one. It is an illustration from the Law Courts. It might be expressed, "I was sentenced to the

[1] H. Thorne, *Notable Sayings of the Great Teacher*, 216.
[2] R. W. Dale, *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, 276.

loss of all things." Paul was arraigned before the judge. He was charged with the high crime of being a follower of Christ. He pleaded guilty to the charge. He was fined right heavily. Exorbitant damages were extorted. "All things" were taken from him. Everything that he had reckoned dear and desirable. "I have suffered the loss of all things." With Paul it is no case of boasting. He is not avowing what he might under given circumstances do. He has done it. He has endured to the ultimate point. So has he known Christ, that for Him he has paid down as damages "all things."

Yet it was well, and Thou hast said in season
"As is the master shall the servant be":
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not Thee;

Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled,
Hide the last mite of the forbidden treasure,
Keep for my joys a world within the world;—

Nay but much rather let me late returning
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin,—

Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part,—
Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish
Forced thro' the channels of a single heart,—

Straight to Thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon Thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg Thine hand to heal it,
Pour Thee the bitter, pray Thee for the sweet.

Then with a ripple and a radiance thro' me
Rise and be manifest, O Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with Thyself, and let the rest be far.[1]

¶ There is a sentence in the biography of David Hill—that rare, gentle, refined spirit who moved like a fragrance in his little part of China—a sentence which has burned itself into the very marrow of my mind. Disorder had broken out, and one of the

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul*.

rioters seized a huge splinter of a smashed door and gave him a terrific blow on the wrist, almost breaking his arm. And how is it all referred to? "There is a deep joy in actually suffering physical violence for Christ's sake." That is all! It is a strange combination of words—suffering, violence, joy! And yet I remember the evangel of the Apostle, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."[1]

Here, and here alone,
Is given thee to *suffer* for God's sake.
In other worlds we shall more perfectly
Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
Grow near and nearer Him with all delight:
But then we shall not any more be called
To suffer, which is our appointment here.
Canst thou not suffer then one hour,—or two?
If He should call thee from thy cross to-day,
Saying, "It is finished!—that hard cross of thine
From which thou prayest for deliverance,"
Thinkest thou not some passion of regret
Would overcome thee? Thou wouldst say, "So soon?
Let me go back, and suffer yet awhile
More patiently;—I have not yet praised God."[2]

4. Paul aims at gaining Christ and being "found in him." From what follows ("not having a righteousness of mine own," R.V.) it would seem that by being "found in him" the Apostle meant being found in His righteousness. There was a period in the Apostle's life when he expected that he would be able to stand before God in his own righteousness. Now all this is changed. He has discovered the worthlessness of his own righteousness, and therefore he has abandoned the idea of being accepted before God on the ground of it. He has come to know that Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness," and in that righteousness he desires to stand. Nothing less than a perfect righteousness can satisfy a perfect God, and there is no perfect righteousness to be found apart from Christ. Paul wished to be found as one taking shelter in this sure refuge.

¶ A man found in Christ is as a bird is found in the air—his native element. Watch the little songster, as it wings its way

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] Mrs. Hamilton King, "The Sermon in the Hospital."

through the ether far up towards the clouds, and then sends down to earth its shower of melody. It is at liberty because it is in its element. And the believer in Christ lives, moves, and has his being filled with the gladness of the life that is inspired by the love of his Lord.

Thy service, Lord, is freedom; yet it binds
With strongest chains; the heart around it winds
A self-imposed restraint; Thy freedmen, we
Still wear Thy badge, and joy that all should see
Our will, by firmest bands, in thrall to Thee.

So is our freedom perfect; or will grow
Such in Thy heaven; lacking some part below
Through earth's remaining gyves,—if once there be
A will with Thine in all things to agree,
Then, wholly bound, we shall be wholly free.[1]

5. Paul sought a righteousness that would be acceptable to God.

(1) Righteousness we must have. We need to be right with God. Paul takes this for granted—that, by one way or another, God and we must be on terms of peace, if not even of friendship. If we ourselves were truly right, we should be right with God. God desires all to be right between us and Him. It is not from His side that any disturbance of peace and friendship has come. Therefore, to be wrong with God is monstrous and criminal, as well as disastrous and terrible.

(2) There is a righteousness which has to be renounced—the righteousness which "is of the law." Paul had set himself to make his position right with God by strictly obeying those laws which Moses delivered, and which men of later times had multiplied. And he had believed himself largely successful in this bold endeavour. If any man ever deserved to win along this line of mortal effort it was Saul, the young and earnest Pharisee. He accepted those precepts as the utterance of the whole that God wanted at men's hands; he knew the great ten commandments to be the sum of the moral law of God; and he girded himself to the fulfilment of it all with an energy and a constancy that have never been surpassed. The task was no pastime; it was a matter of increasing earnestness with him as his young manhood ripened.

[1] Lord Kinloch.

But the light one day broke upon his heart, and lo! with all his proud and strenuous labour, he saw he had been failing all the while; his own righteousness, his righteousness of single-handed obedience to law, was but a toilsome mockery of a righteousness for sinful men. From that hour one of the mottoes of his great life was this: "*Not* having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law."

(3) We can secure a satisfying righteousness through faith in Christ. For He has in Himself a righteousness for us that abounds above all our need. That "law" which we cannot fulfil, He fulfilled. During all that human life of His among the men and women of Galilee and Judæa, He was flooding it with fulfilment. Only one perfect life has been lived in our world, and it was a life in which infinite holiness itself found nothing but the purest, and loftiest, and truest human excellence. That life was the life of Jesus the Man, the Son of God, the Redeemer of men. Our faith in Him receives the merit of that life, which thereby takes the royal place of all our bootless strivings. And what of the past, with its already gathered guilt and doom? He died as well as lived, He suffered as well as obeyed, and all in our stead. Thus He bore away our curse, and cleared the whole length and breadth of our history from every atom of doom, and "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." "Through faith in Christ" —"the righteousness which is of God by faith."

¶ Paul's disownment of every rag of his own righteousness was like the man and the Christian that he was. He had never moved a ship's-length nearer to everlasting good while he had this for his canvas, and himself in command; now, with Christ commanding, and all refitted aloft, he has begun making rapid way. The discarded righteousness is deck cargo there as the vessel glides on. His glance falls upon it, and he feels it is threatening to tamper with his heart. He drags it to the ship's rail; his arms ache as he piles its many folds over the ship's side; it now hangs by the rope that fastened it on deck, and trails heavily about on the sea. It must go. He lifts a hatchet; the rope is severed; the mass sinks out of sight; and ere it has soaked its way to the bottom, the ship has sped miles upon its course—lighter, swifter, cheerier, as it wings onward in the growing lustre of the eternal harbour-land.[1]

[1] J. A. Kerr Bain.

¶ A strong thinker of the past generation, Isaac Taylor, of Ongar, somewhere says that to the end of time a Vicarious Atonement (in the old evangelical sense of those words) will be assailed with objections; and that to the end of time the awakened, the thoroughly awakened, conscience will gravitate to the Vicarious Atonement as to its one possible rest. True witness; let me put my seal humbly to it in both its parts.

Another great Christian of a remoter past, Count Zinzendorf, has left on record a notice of a personal experience of his own which powerfully impressed me when I came on it a few years ago in a French memoir of his life. "About this time I met with the work of Dippel, in which the doctrine of Imputed Righteousness is attacked. Its system seemed to aim at eliminating from the idea of God the notion of His wrath; and just so far as I sympathized with that view I liked the system. I was then in the attitude of the natural theologian; and the 'good God' distressed me when His acts seemed to lack a sequence of mathematical precision. I sought to justify Him, at all costs, to men of reason. *But when I came to think over my own conversion*, I saw that in the death of Jesus, and in the word Ransom, there lay a profound mystery—a mystery before which Philosophy stops short, but as regards which Revelation is immovably firm. This gave me a new intuition into the doctrine of Salvation. I found its blessing and benefit first in the instance of my own heart, then in that of my brethren and fellow-workers (in the Moravian Church). Since the year 1734 the doctrine of the expiatory Sacrifice of Jesus has been, and will for ever be, our treasure, our watchword, our all, our panacea against all evil, alike in doctrine and in practice." True witness, I say again, and again would humbly put my seal to its terms, in regard both of experience and of principle. And the principle of Taylor's dictum and Zinzendorf's inner history is just as true for the progress as it is for the beginning of the believer's life. It is in point, not only in connexion with conversion, but in connexion with the lifelong needs of the Christian, and his lifelong peace and standing before God.[1]

III.

Experience Approves the Exchange.

1. When the Apostle writes this Epistle, he has had ample opportunity to review his life, to test his choice, to reckon up

[1] Bishop H. C. G. Moule, *All in Christ*, 163.

again the balance of life he once struck. He has seen life under many aspects,—amid the rude tribes of the Galatian and Phrygian highlands, in philosophic Athens, in wealthy and luxurious Corinth, in Oriental and superstitious Ephesus, and now, at last, in imperial Rome, mistress of the world. He has learnt that over against the gains which life once possessed he must now place the hatred of his countrymen, the persecutions of the heathen, the perils of travel, the pangs of hunger and cold and nakedness, the exhaustion of manual labour; but with them "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." Yet now, when he may well have tested every item in the account of life, and revalued each; when, though prematurely aged and spent, he might well have desired the fulfilment of the dream of early life, and lamented that he was turned aside from the career at first marked out, he, on the contrary, reiterates his choice: I again renounce to-day, as of old: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss." So, under the palace of the Cæsars, and within what seemed the shadow of death, the Apostle ratified the great renunciation he had made.

¶ One might say that the whole life of Dives is wholly contrary to the cross of Christ. "God predestinated us," St. Paul says. To what? To eternal life? This is the end of all. But to what first? God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. What image? Well! Be it the image of His holiness, the image of His glory. Are there then no scars on that glorious Form, brighter than the sun, or than all created light, irradiant with His Godhead? If we would reign with Him, St. Paul tells us, we must first suffer with Him. If we would be conformed to the likeness of His glory, we must first be conformed to the likeness of His suffering. "Too delicate art thou, my brother, if thou willest both here to rejoice with the world, and hereafter to reign with Christ." Was our Redeemer crowned with thorns that we might be refined sensualists? Did He come down from heaven that we might forget heaven and Him, steeped in all which we can get of this life's fleeting pleasures of sense?[1]

¶ "Depend upon it," said Carlyle, "the brave man has somehow or other to give his life away." We are called upon to make an unconditional surrender. Unconditional, I say, because it cannot be on our own terms. We cannot reserve what we like,

[1] E. B. Pusey.

or choose what we prefer. It is a surrender to a great and awful Will, of whose workings we know little, but which means to triumph, whatever we may do to hinder or delay its purpose. We must work indeed by the best light that we have. We must do the next thing, and the kind thing, and the courageous thing, as it falls to us to do. But sooner or later we must yield our wills up, and not simply out of tame and fearful submission, but because we at last see that the Will behind all things is greater, purer, more beautiful, more holy than anything we can imagine or express. Some find this easier than others—and some never seem to achieve it—which is the hardest problem of all. But there is no peace without that surrender, though it cannot be made at once; there is in most of us a fibre of self-will, of hardness, of stubbornness which we cannot break, but which God may be trusted to break for us, if we desire it to be broken.[1]

2. Paul's estimate stood the final proof. The test of a true religion is that it meets all the legitimate demands of the soul; that in it our past, present, and future shall find their meaning. There must be rest at the centre if there is to be living movement all round. A man like Paul would have worn his spirit down by restless chafing, if he had not found a satisfactory relation to God and his fellow-men. He did find such reconciliation; and the rich result we see in his life. It was real life that he found, life with a large outlook and an undying hope. To know what is meant by "winning Christ" we must pass in review the many-sided statements of truth and the lofty ideals of conduct that he set before himself and his followers. It was not merely the forgiveness of past sins, though that was a proper subject for warmest gratitude; it was not simply the vision of future blessedness, though that was a consoling power in many a trying hour; it was a present satisfaction that linked these into living unity, and proved that faith in the unseen world is the mightiest force to equip a man for stern tasks and tender ministries.

¶ I believe there is no means of preserving rectitude of conduct and nobleness of aim but the Grace of God obtained by daily, almost hourly, waiting upon Him, and continued faith in His immediate presence. Get into this habit of thought, and you need make no promises. Come short of this and you will break them, and be more discouraged than if you had made none. The great

[1] A. C. Benson, *Ruskin: A Study in Personality*, 224.

lesson we have to learn in this world is to *give it all up*. It is not so much resolution as renunciation, not so much courage as resignation, that we need. He that has once yielded thoroughly to God will yield to nothing but God.[1]

¶ Nearly half a century after *Sartor Resartus* was written, Carlyle addressed the students of Edinburgh University as their Lord Rector, and then again, after having tested its worth in a life of heroic labour, he deliberately referred to Goethe's interpretation of the moral significance of Christianity and doctrine of the reverence due by man to his God, to his brethren, and to himself, as what he would rather have written than any other passage in recent literature. "It is only with renunciation," says the great poet and philosopher, who is supposed to have been hewn from ice, and to have had no object in life but to polish himself up, so that the ice might show to advantage, "it is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin."[2]

Unveil, O Lord, and on us shine
In glory and in grace;
This gaudy world grows pale before
The beauty of Thy face.

Till Thou art seen, it seems to be
A sort of fairy ground,
Where suns unsetting light the sky,
And flowers and fruits abound.

But when Thy keener, purer beam
Is pour'd upon our sight,
It loses all its power to charm,
And what was day is night.

Its noblest toils are then the scourge
Which made Thy blood to flow;
Its joys are but the treacherous thorns
Which circled round Thy brow.

And thus, when we renounce for Thee
Its restless aims and fears,
The tender memories of the past,
The hopes of coming years,

[1] Ruskin, in *Life* by E. T. Cook, i. 387.
[2] P. Bayne, *Lessons from My Masters*, 24.

Poor is our sacrifice, whose eyes
Are lighted from above;
We offer what we cannot keep,
What we have ceased to love.[1]

3. He says he has suffered the loss of *all things*. "All things" must include more than those old elements of fleshly confidence already enumerated. It must include everything which Paul still possessed, or might yet attain, that could be separated from Christ, weighed against Him, brought into competition with Him—all that the flesh could even yet take hold of, and turn into a ground of separate confidence and boasting. So the phrase might cover much that was good in its place, much that the Apostle was glad to hold in Christ and from Christ, but which might yet present itself to the unwatchful heart as material of independent boasting, and which, in that case, must be met with energetic and resolute rejection. "All things" may include, for instance, many of those elements of Christian and Apostolic eminence which are enumerated in 2 Cor. xi.; for while he thankfully received many such things and lovingly prized them "in Christ Jesus," yet as they might become occasions to flatter or seduce even an Apostle—betraying him into self-confidence, or into the assertion of some separate worth and glory for himself—they must be rejected and counted to be loss.

"All things." He made the statement just as broad and inclusive as possible. Not all his ill-grounded hopes merely; not the advantages merely which came to him from his conformity to the law, for what was "gain" to him in these respects he "counted loss"; but "*all things*"—personal comfort, personal ends, personal prospects, personal ambitions, the affection of friends, the joys of social life, the triumphs of competition, his own self-development, will, earthly hopes, each and all were to be held second and subordinate by him to obedience to Jesus.

Without Thy presence wealth is bags of cares;
Wisdom but folly; joy, disquiet, sadness;
Friendship is treason, and delights are snares;
Pleasures but pain, and mirth but pleasing madness.
Without Thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have their being, when compared with Thee.

[1] Cardinal Newman.

In having all things, and not Thee, what have I?
Not having Thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I?
And having Thee alone what have I not?
I wish nor sea, nor land, nor would I be
Possessed of heaven, heaven unpossessed of Thee.

4. What he set down at first as loss he now describes as dung or refuse. The word signifies that which is worthless, and is used to express the lees and dregs of wine, the sediment which a man finds in his cup, and drains out upon the ground when he has drunk his liquor, the refuse of fruit, the dross of metals, and the chaff and stubble of wheat. In fact, the root of the word signifies things cast to dogs—dogs' meat, bones from the plates, crumbs and stale pieces brushed from the table, and such things as one is anxious to be rid of.

¶ You may remember Shakespeare's wonderful story of the lady who was sought in marriage by many suitors. To test their manhood, her father had three caskets made—one of gold, one of silver, and one of lead—and in one of the caskets the lady's picture was placed. Each casket had a motto. On the gold one, this—

"Who chooseth me shall get what many men desire."
On the silver one, this—
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
But on the lead one, this—
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

The gold and silver caskets spoke of *getting*; the lead casket spoke of *giving*. He who gave most gained most, for the lady's picture was in the casket that bade a man give and hazard all he had.

I, says Paul, for the image of my Lord, for the excellency of the knowledge of Him, will count all things but loss, will give and hazard all I have.[1]

I wanted wealth, and, at my dear request,
Earth lent a quick supply;
I wanted mirth to charm my sullen breast,
And who more brisk than I?
I wanted fame to glorify the rest,
My fame flew eagle-high;

[1] C. Silvester Horne, *The Soul's Awakening*, 191.

My joy not fully ripe, but all decayed,
Wealth vanished like a shade;
My mirth began to flag, my fame began to fade.

My trust is in the Cross; let beauty flag
  Her loose and wanton sail,
Let count'nance-gilding honour cease to brag
  In courtly terms, and vail;
False beauty's conquest is but real loss,
And wealth but golden dross,
Best honours but a blast: my trust is in the Cross.

The Power of His Resurrection.

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THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.—Phil. iii. 10, 11.

1. PAUL'S first sight of Christ was a sight of the risen Lord. On the way to Damascus he first knew Christ, and it was in the power of His resurrection. And this first sight gave a direction to all the thoughts he had about Him; and, like all men who have profound experiences and a mental history, he started from that which made the crisis in his own life, and put the resurrection in the forefront of his preaching. Among the philosophers on Mars' hill he preached the resurrection,—an idea so foreign to Greek speculation that they could not understand him. They thought "resurrection" was a deity which he wished to introduce; and in some perplexity they canvassed his sermon, saying, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." With the Corinthians, who were inclined to doubt the bodily resurrection, he could come to no compromise. He pushed the question to the extreme. He showed how if this was lost all was lost. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Ye are yet in your sins."

¶ Kingsley once questioned Turner as to his source of inspiration for his masterpiece of colour and arrangement, "The Storm at Sea." "I painted it," replied Turner, "under the stimulus of a personal experience. I was, at my own desire, lashed to the mast of a ship in a gale off the coast of Holland that I might study every incident in detail."[1]

2. Now there is no doubt that in the midst of afflictions, such as Paul then endured, a very special knowledge of Christ might be

[1] B. Wilberforce, *Following on to Know the Lord*, 121.

attained. In the ordinary life of preaching, with the necessity lying on the preacher of finding what in Christ was applicable on each occasion, and with the many hardships and persecutions which this life entailed, he must have attained to a profound knowledge of Christ through both the channels of reflection and experience. But in his two years' imprisonment he had opportunity for long, continuous, connected thought on Christ, and to while away the tedium of the weary hours this must have been his chief resource; and he had also, in his tribulation and bonds, long experience of what resources of consolation and strength were in Him. But all this knowledge did not satisfy him. It rather spurred him on to long for more. There were treasures of wisdom and knowledge not yet opened up to him; there was a depth of feeling to which he had not yet attained. And his prayer was that he might know Christ in a more all-sided way—penetrate further into Him by his thoughts, and feel Him more profoundly in his emotions: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings."

¶ A stranger, watching the countenance or actions of your chosen friend, may misinterpret expressions or deeds—may classify his manifestations under false categories—may see irreverence in his playfulness, harshness in his fidelity, excess in his generosity; but *you*, "knowing" the heart thus severely criticized, can see veneration in its lightness, and from its every string can evoke the music of an unsuspecting and self-oblivious love. The illustration may be applied to the Saviour. He is the best interpreter of Christ who "*knows*" Christ best. The child, not the alien, can best expound the father's utterances. Sympathy is the true exponent. The man who is out of sympathy with Christ will never excel as a commentator on the New Testament. Sympathy can remove difficulties before which a heartless criticism can only tremble.[1]

I.

To Know Christ.

1. The knowledge that Paul sets his heart upon is not a bare historical knowledge of Christ. To know Christ is not to know

[1] J. Parker, *Hidden Springs*, 340.

what is taught about Him, or what He did; it is to have the spiritual experience of His personal presence with the soul; and knowing Christ is here expressed under the particulars of knowing the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. That power, therefore, has its sphere of operation in the most vital processes of spiritual life, and the resurrection of Christ is thus set in the most intimate relations with Christian experience.

¶ It is one thing to stand on the shore and see the great waves and say, "There is a storm"; it is a very different thing to be out in the midst of those waves, tossed every way by them, fighting for your life. On the shore you know of them; in their midst you know them, you know their power. The first is information, the second is experience. Some men are content with knowing facts; other people will be content only with knowing powers. An unfelt fact is nothing at all to these last. There is no truth to them that does not take their nature and their lives into its hands and change them. Of this last class was Paul, who prayed that he might know the power of Christ's resurrection.[1]

¶ When some early navigators, of whom Herodotus tells us, coasted round Africa, and returned with the story that they had reached a region at which their shadows at noonday pointed toward the south, their report was treated as ludicrous by the inhabitants of the Mediterranean seaboard, and among them, by the great historian himself; since the constant experience of their own neighbourhood furnished them, as they thought, with ample reason for thinking that nothing of the kind was possible. When asserting the fact of the Resurrection, St. Paul planted his foot upon the rock of experience; he was proof against the seductions of the "idols" whether of the "den" or of the "cave." He had no need to pray, as have many in our time, that he might be assured of the fact of Christ's Resurrection. What he did pray for was that he might increasingly know its power.[2]

2. What Paul covets is a deep personal experimental knowledge of his Lord. His faith rested not on testimony, not even on his own vision at Damascus, except in so far as it was the outward and visible sign expressive of the inward manifestation to his inmost being. Otherwise the hour of depression might

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Sermons for the Principal Festivals*, 270.

[2] H. P. Liddon, *Easter in St. Paul's*, 124.

have robbed him of all. Testimonies might be false, the vision at Damascus an optical delusion of over-strained hours, and he would have been of all men most miserable; but by faith he could look into the unseen and put Christ there at any moment, and St. Paul had found Him and taken Him as the Master of his life, and as a result his whole life had been changed; and now his great desire is to know more of Christ.

¶ Who knows a country best—the man who has passed through it with all the rapidity of modern locomotion, or the man who has spent years amid its hills and dales, its woods and rivers? Whose verdict on an individual character is most trustworthy—his who has had but a superficial acquaintance with the individual in question, or his who has seen that individual in all the mutations of poverty and wealth, grief and joy, disappointment and realization? Those inquiries admit of but one reply. So in relation to Christ: he who "*knows*" Christ can best explain His words, trust His promises, reveal His nature. In proportion as you "know" Christ, can you understand His most mysterious and His most awful utterances.[1]

II.

To Know the Power of Christ's Resurrection.

1. The expression "to know him, *and* the power of his resurrection," does not mean to know Him, *even* the power of His resurrection; as if it were not *He* strictly that was known, but only the effects of certain things about Him that were felt, such as His resurrection. The meaning is rather the reverse, namely, to know Him *in* the power of His resurrection, to attain, through knowing the power of His resurrection, to a knowledge of Him, to be brought close to Him through all that He has done and all that has happened to Him, so as to know Himself.

¶ As one comes on the diary of his dead mother and reads how she loved him, bore with him, prayed with him, suffered for him, the past is interpreted; she rises out of her grave in a new and deathless beauty. What was seen only in gleams and flickerings is known for a great fire of love that never ceased to burn. The heart discerned only through narrow chinks and

[1] J. Parker, *Hidden Springs*, 339.

apertures is revealed in its completeness; the sacred and pure image passes among the treasures of the soul.[1]

2. What was Paul's conception of the power of Christ's resurrection? To Paul the resurrection was a new departure in the history of mankind. It gave him the ideal and the reality of a new man, not an earthy man, such as Adam was, before he fell, or even as Christ was upon the earth, but a heavenly and spiritual man.

It is only the spiritual man that can have perfect fellowship with God—"flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now Christ on earth was not wholly a spiritual man. He had a body of flesh. But on His resurrection He became wholly spiritual; He assumed a spiritual body. Then He was wholly, in mind and body, the spiritual man, the new man—head of the new humanity, and the second Adam. Then, too, He was constituted Son of God in power by the resurrection from the dead. He was the new man, the Lord from heaven; and being elevated on high, was in a position as new man to put forth all His power to save men—His power, which was the power of His resurrection. And it is this power that the Apostle desires to know. Therefore, when he says the power of His resurrection, he means all the power which He now puts forth, and all the power which thinking of Him, as He now is, exerts on men's minds.

¶ The student of science tells us that all energy is convertible into kindred forms. Light, heat, electricity, sound, may perhaps be degrees of the same force which is addressing men in different ways, and through varied senses. More than one inventor asserts that he is able to change the rays of light which come from the sun into electrical energy. Life, suggests a popular writer, is built up of atoms which have the power to attract and repel each other, and death is such a loss of that power that their vibrancy ceases, and they fall inert into space. Whatever is seen, heard, tasted, felt, may be a modification of one original substance, for all forces are convertible, and chemical elements are being resolved into simpler elements. Whether this theory is correct or not, the forces which asserted themselves in Christ's resurrection reappear in many forms in the life of His redeemed people. That resurrection transmutes itself into a power through which

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll, *Ten-Minute Sermons*, 120.

I am taken out of condemnation and brought into newness of life. It is the source from which I receive my baptism of spiritual power. In the deliverance from peril and death vouchsafed to the Church and its members, this sublime event of which the Apostles were the witnesses asserts itself anew. And in the last day the Lord's own rising will prove itself the germinal movement in the resurrection of His servants.[1]

¶ That so many thousands of human beings have assembled to worship our Lord and God beneath the dome of this Cathedral Church this Easter night, is a statistical fact which, if it were ascertained, would have no particular interest if it were not that linked to that fact is the idea of its vast, its complex, its humanly speaking unascertainable power. So many intelligences enlightened by the truth of Christ, so many hearts warmed by the love of Christ, so many wills braced by the grace of Christ, so many souls brought face to face with truth yet without spiritual benefit, and therefore most assuredly not without spiritual loss; this is the power of the fact before us, not the less certain because its precise measure cannot be taken, not the less interesting assuredly because its import reaches far beyond the present moment, far beyond the confines of time to the distinct horizons of eternity. And St. Paul's meaning in the text is that, so far as he may, he would, in respect of a far more momentous fact, measure at least some departments of its power, make some progress in discoveries which as man he could never hope to exhaust.[2]

3. The resurrection was the crowning blow at sin, and carries with it a justifying power. If Christ be not risen, there has been no victory over sin and no annulment of the law; and there can be no evidence for the sinner that the death of Jesus stands in any such relation to his faith as that the righteousness of God, which is by faith, is become his; or that, even though he died with Christ, he has a new and spiritual life in the soul. Paul traversed precisely this road in his religious experience. Jesus appeared to him as risen and glorified. Then he knew that His death had not been that of a malefactor or of a pestilent deceiver, but was the one offering for sin which was adequate, and that Jesus whom he persecuted was his Lord and Saviour. Peter testifies to the same effect, when he tells us that, from the despair and sadness of the disciples at the crucifixion, and the disappoint-

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Alienated Crown*, 277.
[2] H. P. Liddon, *Christ's Conquest*, 58.

ment of their hopes that followed, they were "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." And the Jews, who could not receive the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and to whom His ignominious death was an absolute bar to His claim, when they accepted Peter's testimony that He had risen, again saw also in His death their atonement, and repented and were converted. We see the power of His resurrection for justification.

¶ Several years ago, a picture exhibited in the Royal Academy was based upon the story that Oliver Cromwell, on the night following the execution of Charles the First, stole into the room at Whitehall to look upon the body of his former foe. The painting shows him in the act of drawing aside the sheet that had been cast over the dead king. Into the lines of that intent face the artist has skilfully combined inexorable firmness and a faint touch of pity: but there is no sign of scattering clouds. The features of the Protector seem to say: "Alas, poor king! it must needs be so. And perhaps the end is not yet." Not quite sure is he that the scaffold will mark the end of the trouble. More heads may need to fall. The execution about which historians and jurists are still debating was looked upon as inevitable. No Cavalier could have read in those strongly-lined features licence for a new opposition to the rights of the Parliament. No friend of Charles could have read encouragement in the face that was looking upon the havoc of block and scaffold. But if the Protector could have undone the day, and have freed the captive of death, such an act might have been read into an assurance of peace. If a resurrection could have been brought to pass, that would have been a pledge of amnesty.[1]

¶ Across the page, in the old archives of France, on which the taxes of the Department of Domremy should have been enumerated, was written the sentence of remission, "Free for the Maid's sake." It was there that Joan of Arc was born, the Maid who died for her country. God has His archives, where my sins should be commemorated and my penalty set down. His Son has blotted out, by love and death, the dark record. But I must be sure that He is risen, and that my holy Judge has accepted His substitution, before I can read the new writing on the page, "Forgiven and free for the Redeemer's sake."[2]

4. The power that Paul has specially in view is a renewing

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Alienated Crown*, 281.
[2] A. Smellie, *In the Secret Place*, 359.

and sanctifying power. Christ is not only a Redeemer from sin, but the author of a new life in them that believe. He so comes to men through their trust in Him, through their self-surrender and their clinging to Him as for their life, that He and they become identified in a most real and living union. He is the vine, they are the branches. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." If any man will identify himself in his inmost soul, in his will, in his affections, in his heart, with Jesus Christ, surrendering to Him the government of his life, he becomes thereby a new creature. For him old things are passed away, and all things become new. He is like a child born into a new world. He is alive from the dead; he is risen as Christ was raised. So close, indeed, is the identification that in their measure the mysteries of Christ's earthly life are reproduced in the spiritual experience of the believer. He is crucified with Christ, with Christ he is buried, he is raised, he is set in the heavenly places, he walks in newness of life. He knows, in short, the power of the resurrection, which is just the power of the risen Christ Himself, that power by which He reproduces in all who surrender themselves to His love "the characteristic qualities of His own perfect manhood."

¶ When Christ rose from the dead, He was henceforth free from all the conflict, separated from all the struggle: the sacrifice was over, the victory won; and as the world had done its worst with Him, He had done with the world. When He rose, His home was in Heaven. And as we submit our spirits to the spirit of the risen and living Christ, He bears us away with Himself to the heaven of holiness and purities which is His home, consecrates us with Himself to all that is good, and holds us fast to it by His might. When we realize our Lord's living power, and lose our natures in it, He Himself lives out the ideals of holiness within us. If only we could so realize His living power, and so lose ourselves in it, that His life might enfold ours utterly, and every movement of our life might be but the manifestation of His life through us, the purest and the best would be revealed in us. He Himself would reveal it in us, were we abandoned to Him. Union with the risen and living Christ brings us into goodness, because it brings the Christ, who lives in goodness, into us.[1]

¶ A great critic has said that David Cox was the first painter to put the wind into his trees. He made men see the movements

[1] H. W. Clark, *Meanings and Methods of the Spiritual Life*, 38.

of the air in the undulating branches, the upturned leaves, the swaying masses of foliage. Men should see the wind of the Spirit in my life, shaking off the dust and grime of sin, stirring me to what is highest and purest and tenderest, bending me before my unseen Lord, who does with me whatever He will. And it is from the throne to which He has risen that He imparts His Spirit to me, and that He communicates Himself.[1]

I thought His love would weaken
As more and more He knew me;
But it burneth like a beacon,
And the light and heat go through me.

5. The resurrection has a subtle, pervading and diffusive power, exercised in great part unconsciously, affecting character in its very earliest stages, entering into the currents of thought, feeling, example, and influence in all Christian households, and, to a great extent, in every Christian community. In all growth space is an essential element. The kernel of wheat sown in a shallow vessel shoots up into a green blade, which withers and dies before it comes to flower. The acorn planted in a thick-set grove never exceeds the stature of a shrub. In like manner the soul shapes itself by the space in which it expects to grow. Bounded by the span of this earthly life, it is narrowed, dwarfed, belittled in every direction. It is conscious of small room and brief time for increase, and instinctively adapts itself to its mean and limited conditions. It strikes its tendrils into the ground, because it has no heaven towards which it can climb. It becomes sordid, because its future has in it nothing great, or lofty, or enduring. But the very child who is taught from his earliest years to believe himself immortal, though nothing may be farther from his distinct consciousness than living for immortality, yet has his infant being enlarged, exalted, strengthened by the thought. His aspirations transcend the measure of earthly possibility, nor are they checked by the fear or darkened by the shadow of death. His ideal of character takes on, without his knowing it, much of the heavenly element, and is immeasurably larger and higher than if he had never heard of a life to come.

¶ I never go into the pulpit on Easter morning without being thrilled by the remembrance that all Western Christendom is

[1] A. Smellie, *In the Secret Place*, 359.

exulting and triumphing in the resurrection of our Lord. In the presence of the Cross and the open Sepulchre all the differences which separate those who are conscious of having been redeemed through Christ are forgotten.[1]

III.

Fellowship in Suffering.

1. What does the Apostle mean by the fellowship of Christ's sufferings? He is speaking of his own sufferings and self-denials, endured for Christ's Gospel, and he says that he counts them as the merest refuse if he can win Christ and know the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death. He alludes here, not to union by faith with the death and sufferings of Christ, but to the making up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church. And in all active labour and personal self-denial which is to be endured in the great work, the power of His resurrection sustains and energizes and consecrates. Human life is become all sacred through this power; human nature glorified, because Christ was a man; the body honoured because of the resurrection; suffering consecrated, death vanquished, the soul made pure and loving, the grave a peaceful and holy resting-place —all by means of the working of this holy life, which is in all who believe.

¶ No one can read St. Paul's Epistles thoughtfully without seeing what a prominent thought was this one of union with Christ in His life and death and resurrection. One cannot but be struck with the way in which he takes it for granted, writing to the Colossians, that Christ's resurrection was their resurrection, and that henceforward their life is changed; cannot fail to see how all his perils and sufferings and persecutions he accepted as a necessary corollary from the fact that he shared that Christlike life which could not be perfect without fellowship in Christ's sufferings and death.[2]

¶ When all went well with St. Paul and he felt his powers sufficient for the task he had in hand, he could not realize the presence of the unseen Partner of his labours. But when he was

[1] *Life of R. W. Dale*, 329.

[2] A. L. Moore, *From Advent to Advent*, 144.

swept off his feet in some storm like that which overwhelmed him in Jerusalem when the mob tried to murder him, or when he had to face the Cæsar's judgment seat, absolutely alone, without a single friend by him, then he felt an inrush of Divine Power which made him realize that the Lord was standing by him and strengthening him. Such an experience was worth a hundred tumults.[1]

¶ Charles Kingsley, speaking of some dark and awful days he had experienced, tells us that he challenged our Lord in such earnest prayer to fulfil His promise that he almost expected Him to appear visibly; but though He did not do this, He gave him a sufficient answer in the still small voice which brought peace to his soul.[2]

2. How can we realize the fellowship of Christ's sufferings? We can meditate lovingly on His awful sufferings, till our deepest sympathies are aroused. And then, taking our own sufferings, we can unite them with His, and so get Him to share them with us. When St. Paul wished that he might suffer as His master suffered, doubtless it was because in partaking of Christ's sufferings, he would get great good which could be got in no other way. And this for two reasons easily thought of. For one thing, the wise and good man knew that the very best, noblest, kindest, sweetest, that is in human nature or that can be got out of it, the most heavenly character and disposition, the things that make man or woman look but a very little lower than the angels, are brought out by sanctified sorrow, as never by anything else. And for another thing, he, who knew human nature so well, knew that there is nothing that draws so close together as the great tie of common suffering—suffering which people have with a patient mind endured together: and thus that there was something in the "fellowship of his sufferings" that would seem to unite him very nearly with his Lord, by the bond of a brotherly sympathy.

¶ On the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest and hold securest; and on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy.[3]

[1] Bishop G. H. S. Walpole, *Vital Religion*, 94.
[2] Bishop G. H. S. Walpole.
[3] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (*Works*, iv. 257).

¶ Experience alone completely teaches; it is participation in a particular situation that brings true comprehension of it, and so gives the Divine capacity of sympathy. There is a universal priesthood of man apart from anything official, a Divine feeling for human infirmity, the glow of a heart that sorrows and joys because it loves. Nothing will teach this so powerfully as experience. The unerring appreciation of an event comes to the man who himself has felt the force of it. Experimental knowledge is of the lasting sort, and the sort which brings comprehension. The world is made kin by a touch of nature, and nature teaches with irresistible force by facts. Actual community of sorrow or of joy will dissolve all conventionalities, when nothing else could. The recognition of nature's bond will then come in a flash, a gleam of intuition. It brings sympathy; and sympathy will unite men as no written bond could do, though it were attested and secured by every legal means. It is stronger than any deed of contract; for it is a compact written in flesh, and signed with blood.[1]

3. To know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings must be to suffer as He suffered, and to have the same mind amidst suffering that He had; and while suffering, to remember that He also suffered, and thus, like the three children in the furnace, to feel beside us another like the Son of God. That is what Paul means in this passage. He refers principally to external sufferings, to persecutions and probable martyrdom which lay before him, and which at the last overtook him. In his trials he was knowing Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings; in his martyrdom he was made conformable unto His death. But, though not exactly in the same way, every Christian in his life partakes of the sufferings of Christ, and in dying is made conformable unto His death. We must go over again what Christ went through. It is given us not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer because of Him, having the same conflict which we saw in Him,—"to bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

¶ Water has no power to generate electrical energy as it lies in the still, tideless lake, the sluggish river which moves placidly through a flowered landscape, or in the dikes and canals of Holland, the land of tulips and dairy farms. The engineer puts his turbines and his dynamos where torrents come thundering through the frowning chasms and rushing out of the gloomy valleys. In the dim mountain defiles, and amidst the sheer precipices where giant

[1] Hugh Black, *Comfort*, 130.

waterfalls are at play, light awaits the call of science, which can change the midnight darkness of great empires into noonday. And the power of the resurrection, the glory of its unknown forces, its mystic possibilities are not always known in the quiet scenes of life and amidst its pastoral serenities. It was Paul's tribulations that made luminous the force through which the shadows of death and the grave were dispelled. It is through stress and danger, through turmoil and conflict, that the glory of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead manifests itself afresh.[1]

4. And there is another step. To know the fellowship of His sufferings is to suffer for others as He did.

¶ From early childhood we have known and appreciated the sweet German legend of the robin redbreast's crimson feathers. The fable runs that, touched perhaps by that secret attraction which draws all that lives to the Maker of all life, the tiny bird lit upon the Cross of Calvary, and strove with all his force to withdraw one thorn from the crown that was tearing His sacred brow. When success rewarded his efforts, the gush of blood that followed crimsoned his breast, and, in recognition of his action, he was permitted to bear, ever in his body, the "marks of the Lord Jesus." Absolutely certain is it that those who draw forth but one thorn from His brow, by faithfulness, submission, courage, perseverance, self-denial, sympathy, seeking and saving His lost, are lessening His burden, lengthening His arm, rejoicing His heart, sharing in the mystery of His Divine distress, and fulfilling the aspiration of the text, "That I may know him, and the fellowship of his sufferings."[2]

¶ Blessed, thrice blessed, are ye to whom your Lord has fitted your cross, as He in His righteous but tender love saw best for you. Blessed are ye, if ye but learn your blessedness, whatever cross by nature or by the order of His government He has placed upon you. Ye will not seek high things on whom the lowly cross has been bestowed. But treasure it up for yourselves in your secret hearts, there is no form of it which is not healing—bury it deep there, it will heal you, first through His precious Spirit, and when it has healed you, will through you heal others. Only yield yourselves to His Fatherly hand who gave it to you, to do to you, in you, through you, His loving and gracious will. To be by suffering made meet for doing well, and to do well and suffer for it, and to suffer in order that we may do well, this is our calling: and if God finds in us thus any secret resemblance to the Son of

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Alienated Crown*, 291.

[2] B. Wilberforce, *Following on to Know the Lord*, 127.

Man, He may also lift us up towards heaven, and draw men unto us by suffering.[1]

> Yea, through the shadow of an Agony
> Cometh Redemption—if we may but pass
> In the same footprints where our Master went,
> With Him beside us.

5. How far can one enter into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings? St. Paul says, to the point of death—"becoming conformed unto his death." The reference is not to the impending death of martyrdom, but to that daily dying unto self and the world which the Apostle exhibited in the heroic self-denials of his resplendent life. This is the climax of what he has said as to fellowship in Christ's sufferings. The last and worst of our Lord's sufferings were in His death. And in this too, St. Paul desired to be made like his Saviour. The plain meaning of his words is, that he would be thankful if, being supported through it all by his Lord's presence and the Blessed Spirit, he were appointed to die by just such a cruel death as Christ died! But there is another conformity to our Redeemer's death, which was not absent from His Apostle's mind, and which is more like us. We are made conformable to Christ's death when we die to sin, when we are "dead to sin." And "if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And Paul had attained a real conformity to his Master's death—which yet is within the reach of those whose hands will never be pierced by the nails, and whose limbs will never be stretched upon the Cross when he wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

> When Christ let fall that sanguine shower
> Amid the garden dew,
> Oh, say what amaranthine flower
> In that red rain upgrew?

[1] E. B. Pusey.

If yet below the blossom grow,
  Then earth is holy yet:
But if it bloom forgotten, woe
  To those who dare forget!

No flower so healing and so sweet
  Expands beneath the skies;
Unknown in Eden, there unmeet;
  Its name? Self-sacrifice!
The very name we scarce can frame
  And yet that flower's dark root
The monsters of the wild might tame
  And heaven is in its fruit.

Alas! what murmur spreads around?
  The news thereof hath been:
But now no more the man is found
  Whose eyes that flower have seen:
Then nobles all! leave court and hall,
  And search the wide world o'er:
For whoso finds this Sangreall,
  Stands crowned for evermore.[1]

IV.

Attaining to the Resurrection.

1. When he says, "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead," St. Paul does not express doubt as to his actually attaining to it. What he expresses is wonder, and awe, and joy before the grandeur of such a prospect, and the feeling how alone such a joyful grandeur is to be reached, which is only through fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, and by being conformed unto His death. Perhaps we should think of it in this way. Christ, in that He died, died unto sin. His death was for sin, unto sin. But He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. When He died to sin, His connexion with sin was over. And He rose by virtue of His own native life. He could not be holden of death. His dying was, one might say, a special thing; it was unnatural. His rising was natural, it was a rebound; it was the life in Him asserting itself.

[1] Aubrey de Vere.

And so the believer, having died to sin, having in death put it away, rises in virtue of his new life. "The body, indeed, is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Being conformed to Christ in death, we attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Sin is altogether put off, and the spirit of life asserts itself, and draws the body to itself.

2. It is an identification in will and in life. If Christ has so identified Himself with us as to make His life strictly, and in all aspects of it, a true representation of human life; if when I look on Christ I can say, "That is the ideal, the model of every true man's life," then it follows, undoubtedly, that whatever step Christ has taken, I shall be justified in feeling that that also belongs to my existence and is mine, as a follower of my Lord and Saviour. Or to put it in another light; if Christ, in His life here, has shown me the life I am to live—the life I shall live, as one of His disciples; and if then His resurrection is a necessary sequel to His life, my resurrection is, for the same reason, an equally necessary sequel to my life; the conclusion then assumes a moral certainty.

This is just how the Apostles all regarded it. They had so intense a feeling of the identity of life in Christ and in us—of the fact that Christ had been the true Man, living the true human life —of the fact that Christianity meant nothing less than entering into that life in every aspect and particular of it, that they would not have understood Christ's being anything that they might not; that Christ having won and attained any good was a morally certain reason for their sharing the same. Moreover the resurrection of Christ was to them the sequel, the moral necessity, of His life. To have lived Christ's life, and not to rise from death, appeared to them an impossibility.

¶ Conceive a man's dead body lying horizontally on the ground. Conceive that by some imparted power, the head of that body begins to move, to rise, to assume a perpendicular position, to raise itself on the earth, to mount, to ascend. It is clear that as the head does this, all the limbs, following its motions, necessarily do the same, in their proper order. They rise; they are upright; they mount; they soar. Just so it is with the rising Saviour. His people are drawn by Him, with an attraction stronger than all the laws and affinities of the material world. They are held

to Him by fibres and strong cords, faster than the ligaments of our physical frame. And so, if you only be "in Christ" you are risen: you cannot choose but rise. It is in your unity with Christ. It is part of your identity with the Head in which you live. It is "the power of his resurrection."[1]

¶ The same flood of sunshine which frees the Rhone from its glacier-prison opens the bloom in the cleft of the rock that smiles like a babe just refreshed with sleep. And the same tide of power which unlocked the sealed tomb where Jesus lay opens the pitiless heart of the persecutor and brings the vernal tenderness of the evangel into the quiet life of Lydia. We are planted in the likeness of the resurrection, and the elemental correspondence which is to issue in glorified sonship must assert itself within us more and more.[2]

3. The resurrection is a present experience. We are so apt to think of the resurrection as a remote truth, to be realized in some distant future, when some day we shall die and live again, that the very idea of attaining to such a resurrection now is not easy to grasp. But here we have a resurrection which can be attained any day. "I have not already attained," says St. Paul, "but I press on." It is possible, that is to say, for a man to-day, who seems perfectly healthy, to be dying or dead, and for a man to rise from the dead to-day and attain to the resurrection.

The process is now going on. The spiritual body is silently being formed in the depths of our present inner existence. The thoughts, words, and deeds of the present are all mysteriously contributing to its future manifestation and development. That clothing upon, as the Apostle speaks of the completion of the future body, is now being prepared for; it will be beheld and realized when, as the same Apostle says, we shall "all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ." That final investiture of all souls according to the deeds done in the body is indisputably reserved for that last great day when, not man only, but the whole waiting creation, will be sharers in the long-promised restitution. The completion will be then, but the process within each one of us is going on now. Each day, perhaps, adds some lineament; each deed some real, though unperceived, impress; each habit some trace and configuration. Often are we

[1] James Vaughan, *Sermons*, ii. 7.

[2] T. G. Selby, *The Alienated Crown*, 289.

permitted to trace even in the mortal and the perishable the holy outlines of that spiritual body which will be the wedding garment of the soul when the Lord returns again to His own, and all things become known. Do we not sometimes even in this life see faces in which we seem to ourselves to behold the light, as it were, of another world; brows on which the very peace of God seems gently to rest; eyes, with their indefinable far-off look, which seem to be beholding Him who is invisible? And, as we see this, do we not sometimes feel a vague consciousness that we are looking on what will be hereafter, and are merely catching glimpses of the power of the Lord's resurrection revealing itself behind the veil of the mortal and the perishable?

¶ Our life is like the life of a tree, which is always full of immediate apparent failure, which is always dropping back after each rich summer to the same bareness that it had last winter, which keeps no leaves or fruit, and stands again and again stripped of every sign of life that it has put forth, and which yet has gathered, as we see when we watch it with a larger eye—has gathered all those apparent failures into the success of one long, continuous growth; has not lost the strength of those old summers, but gathered them into its own enlarged girth and sturdier strength. What seemed to perish and die has really been only grown in, and makes the mature life of, the noble tree. And so it is with our hopes and plans and endeavours and resolutions and thoughts, which seem to fade and perish, but which, if we have the Christian vitality about us, have been really grown in and make the new life, which is not merely a thing of the future but a thing of the present.[1]

4. The full consummation is in the future. It is plain enough that if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us there is no term to its operations until our mortal bodies also are quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. The ethical and spiritual resurrection in the present life finds its completion in the bodily resurrection in the future. It cannot be that the transformation wrought in a human life shall be complete until it has flowed outwards into and permeated the whole of manhood, body, soul, and spirit. The three measures of meal have each to be influenced before "the whole is leavened." If we duly consider the elements necessary to a perfect realization of the Divine ideal

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Sermons for the Principal Festivals*, 277.

of humanity, we shall discern that redemption must have a gospel to bring to the body as well as to the spirit. Whatever has been devastated by sin must be healed by Jesus. It is not necessary to suppose that the body which dies is the body which rises again; rather the Apostle's far-reaching series of antitheses between that which is sown and that which is raised leads us to think that the natural body, which has passed through corruption, and the particles of which have been gathered into many different combinations, does not become the spiritual body. The person who dies is the person who lives through death, and who assumes the body of the resurrection; and it is a person, not the elements which make up the personality, who is spoken of as risen from the dead. The vesture may be different, but the wearer is the same.

¶ We shall have known by anticipation some of the phantoms that haunt the dark valley of the shadow of death, and perhaps seen also in the experience of others that He is always there; seen, perhaps, what Archbishop Benson saw when he sat by the bedside of his dying son. "That he saw Christ," is the Archbishop's witness, "we who watched him are as certain as of anything we know at all." The dark paths and deep valleys are not wholly strange, and as we enter them it is with the sense of wonder that accompanied Charles Kingsley's descent: "I wonder what it will be like!" *i.e.*, what will it be like at the other end, when, having left our friends here, He takes us by the hand, round that bend of the path hidden from the living, which none but those He guides have ever seen, that turn where He reveals Himself in His full glory, and we at last know what it is "to know the Lord"?[1]

¶ The grave is only the moat around the inner castle of the King, across which they who have long been His loving and loyal retainers on the farther side enter it, sure of a welcome to the heart of His hospitality. Far above any morbid or affected, unnatural, unhuman pretence of a wish for death there towers this calm Christian confidence, ready to die, yet glad to stay here until the time comes; knowing that death will be release, and yet finding life happy and rich with the power of the resurrection already present in it; counting both worlds God's worlds, and so neither despising this nor dreading the other. That is the Christian light on the dark river and the fields beyond, that streams forth only from the opened door of Jesus' tomb.[2]

[1] G. H. S. Walpole, *Vital Religion*, 100.

[2] Phillips Brooks, *Sermons for the Principal Festivals*, 279.

"What think you, father—is death very sore?"
"My boy," the father answered, "we will try
To make it easy with the present God.
But, as I judge, though more by hope than sight,
It seems much harder to the lookers on
Than to the man who dies. Each panting breath
We call a gasp, may be in him the cry
Of infant eagerness; or, at worst, the sob
With which the unclothed spirit, step by step,
Wades forth into the cool eternal sea.
I think, my boy, death has two sides to it—
One sunny, and one dark—as this round earth
Is every day half sunny and half dark.
We on the dark side call the mystery *death*;
They on the other, looking down in light,
Wait the glad *birth*, with other tears than ours."[1]

[1] George MacDonald, "A Hidden Life."

Pressing On

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Pressing On.

Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii. 13, 14.

1. The Apostle here speaks of his past and his present life under the well-known figure of a race. Before his conversion he was like a man running a race, a race of his own, with his eyes set on a lower goal. And then Christ apprehended him, caught hold of him, turned him round, and set him running towards another goal; and he is pursuing that goal yet, and it is still a long way off. "Not as though I had already attained." In the days when he was a young, proud Pharisee, the rising hope of his party, petted, praised, and flattered for his zeal and cleverness, he had regarded himself as well-nigh faultless. The ideal of Pharisaism was not very exalted or sublime, and if you are content to aim low you soon get abundantly satisfied with yourself. But Christ had come and given him a model which was not so easy to follow. Christ had shown him an ideal which soared mountain-high above him. He had been pursuing that for years, and it was still out of his reach.

Ever since the day when Christ called to him from on high—stopped him at the gate of Damascus, struck from his hand the weapon of persecution, and shrivelled up in his bosom, as by a lightning flash, the commission of the High Priest—ever since that day, which had turned his former gains into losses, and made him count his own righteousness as mere refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, he has been running the race set before him, not as uncertainly, but with a definite adherence to its rules and a resolute determination for success; not counting himself to have apprehended, not relaxing his efforts as he nears the goal, but straining every sinew and nerve to the

uttermost, if so be he may at last reach the winning-post and attain the imperishable wreath which hangs thereon. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind"—that part of the course which has already been traversed—and reaching forth unto, straining every power to the uttermost after, those things which are before—that remainder of space which lies still between me and the goal—I press toward the mark—I press on according to (by the rule and direction of) the mark or goal—for the prize of the high calling—what is elsewhere spoken of as the heavenly calling—of God in Christ Jesus.

¶ In olden times games were held in Greece in honour of its gods. They were held around the tombs of heroes and of brave men, as part of a religious festival. Every fifth year such games were held at Elis, in Olympia (the periods between were called Olympiads, and the years were counted from them), and every third year similar games were held at Corinth, and called Isthmian games, from the isthmus that there joins the peninsula to the mainland. Men came from every part of Greece to contend in these games, or to witness them; but no one who was not a true-born Greek was allowed to share in them. The spectators sat on benches, raised one above the other, round an open space strewed with sand, called the stadium. It was about six hundred feet long; and in this open space the games took place. They consisted of chariot races, horse races, and foot races; there were wrestling matches and boxing matches, contests in throwing the heaviest weights to the longest distance, contests also between singers, painters, sculptors, poets, and musicians. Ten judges were set apart as umpires of the games; they were chosen ten months beforehand, and received purple dresses in which they sat on raised chairs, to watch that the rules of the games were observed, and to award the prizes. The champions were the picked men of Greece: they prepared themselves with the utmost care for some months beforehand, knowing that they should have to meet others perfect in their own line. They had to observe the greatest temperance that they might be in full health, choosing such food and drink as would make their muscles firm and tough, not heavy and fleshy. They had to practise their exercises constantly, bathing frequently, and rubbing their bodies with oil to keep their joints supple. In short, there was no chance of winning a prize unless the candidate was willing to make his preparation the business of his life.[1]

[1] R. Twigg, *Sermons*, 284.

2. There are some people who define Christian perfection in this life as a rounded and complete thing, as the reaching of the goal—the very thing Paul declared he had not attained. They define it as though the life had reached its final form once for all, as though we are perfectly carved into our final beauty and already dwell in perfect holiness. Such a conception must of necessity lead to self-complacency, and close the vision of a higher goal in the present life. But that is not the meaning of this passage. According to Paul, as many as be perfect have the vision of a far-away goal. Christian perfection, according to this criterion, is that stage of life which realizes most intensely its imperfection. When a man thinks he is perfect and complete, he is a great distance from perfection. When a man comes to the conclusion that there is nothing more to do for his life, you may depend upon it that there is a great deal to do. The perfect man as here defined is the man that is least satisfied with himself, the man that sees vast stretches before him to be traversed, the man that knows there are shining heights yet to climb, that there are glories unspeakable ahead.

¶ Sir Joshua Reynolds could not look at any picture remaining in his studio without wishing to retouch it here and there. The forms on the canvas were not as fair as the visions in the painter's mind. Such dissatisfaction always gives ground for the hope that "the best is yet to be." The same principle holds good in the spiritual life. The outlook is ominous where there is not a profound self-dissatisfaction.[1]

I.

St. Paul with his Back to the Past.

1. St. Paul was a man who had to bear about with him throughout his life the bitter memory of a misdirected past. He had become an Apostle, the chief agent in the propagation of the Christian religion; but he could not escape the memory of days when he had done everything to thwart the religion which he now confessed. He had persecuted the Church and stood by while its first martyr was stoned to death. As he thought of

[1] T. H. Champion.

these things, they paralysed his apostleship. Who was he that he should be a leader? "I am not worthy to be called an apostle." He was, however, sane enough to see that, though this past could not be effaced, it could be atoned for. A habit of mind, he concluded, must be cultivated which lets the dead past bury its dead, drops one's paralysing mistakes just where they are, and leaves one free to press forward to the high calling which lies before.

But the chief thing that St. Paul had in his mind when he spoke about forgetting the things that are behind was not his past sins but rather his past attainments. He had already made some progress in the life of faith. Most of us would say he had made a great deal, and would feel almost envious of him, thinking, Would God we were only half as far on as he was! What patience, what courage, what zeal, what self-denying love, what a readiness to bear the cross, what untiring faith he had manifested in weariness and watching, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness! Now, that was just what St. Paul especially wished to forget. Past attainments in grace were not, in his view, things to dwell on; they were only stages to be left behind.

¶ In that old foot-race on the isthmus of Corinth the men who competed for the prize did not stop every now and then to look back with complacency upon that portion of the course which they had already traversed. Nor, when they had run a certain distance, did they sit down and say, "It is enough." The coveted crown would never have been theirs, had they done so. Moreover they would have been disgraced in the estimation of all the onlookers. They forgot the things which were behind, and reached forth unto those which were before. Even so in his life-course did St. Paul.[1]

2. Strictly speaking, the continuity of life cannot be divided at any point, and what is behind put away as forgotten, rolled up, folded as a garment and laid aside as if no more a part of us. We cannot deal with the past in this way, nor would it be well with us if we could. Up to whatever point we have run our race, we have not merely, like the swift runner, passed over ground to be forgotten, we have also accumulated experience, and added to the sum of our life moments which can never be forgotten, which

[1] A. C. Price, *Fifty Sermons*, iv. 62.

have entered into its texture, and given it direction and colour which it will more or less always keep. We cannot forget the past in this sense, and of course St. Paul did not mean that we should. No man knew human life, or all the depths of the spiritual life, better than the Apostle. He knew very well, as we all know, that there must be so far a conscious continuity in life, a thread of loving association and memory binding it all up, making it what it is of happiness and misery to any human being. There are dark days which still leave their lengthening shadows upon us, it may be from a distant past, which we cannot escape. And again, there are dear and ever-bright faces that shine out upon us from the shadows, and there is the echo of loving voices, long silent, sounding in our hearts, never to die away. All this gives the past an irrevocable hold upon us.

¶ "The past is myself . . ." cries Robert Louis Stevenson. "In the past is my present fate; and in the past also is my real life." Truly it was no shallow thinker who said, "Poor is the man who has no yesterday."[1]

¶ The winter leaves or bud-scales of a tree leave behind them, when they drop off, a peculiar mark or scar on the bark, just as the summer leaves do when they fall. On every branch a series of these scars, in the shape of rings closely set together, may be seen, indicating the points where each growing shoot entered on the stage of rest. And so every experience through which we pass, every act we perform, goes into the very substance of our being, and we can never be after it what we were before it. We cannot undo our deeds, or altogether escape the consequences that have followed them. The past is indelible, and the memory of it remains like a scar upon the soul.[2]

3. True forgetting really means finer memory; it is displacing one memory by another, by a stronger one, an antidotal one. It means concentrating on the second phase so that the first is weakened and neutralized, and fades out like a well-treated ink-stain. It is removing a weed from the garden of thought and then planting a live, sturdy flower in its stead. It is cultivating new interests, new relations, new activities. Time helps wonderfully, but especially when we go into partnership with her.

[1] H. Dudden, *Christ and Christ's Religion*, 249.
[2] H. Macmillan, *The Ministry of Nature*, 232.

¶ One great truth for us all, says Goethe, is not that the past is sullied, but that the future is unsullied. It is in this sense that we should forget the things that are behind and reach on to the things that are before. I may be reminded that to talk about forgetting what we cannot help remembering is a contradiction in terms. So it is; but, thank God, it is not a contradiction in experience. Others besides the Apostle Paul have come to realize that literal remembrance and moral forgetfulness can exist side by side in the same memory and heart. I have done things in the past, sometimes from want of thought, sometimes from want of heart—things I remember with sorrow and contrition. But I have repented of them, and prayed for grace to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And God has enabled me to realize His forgiveness so effectually that to-day the sins, while remembered, are morally forgotten.[1]

¶ A great editor once said: "The true secret of editing is to know what to put into the waste-basket." Forgetting is the soul's place for losing discarded thoughts, depressing memories, mean ambitions, false standards, and low ideals.[2]

4. Fine forgetfulness is the condition of moral progress. We must be perpetually cutting ourselves free from the past, if we are to push on to a larger and better future. The artist forgets his early failures, the author his first grotesque experiments in literature, and the saint his first stumbling steps, for the same reason—a reason which is imperative—that no progress is possible to a mind clogged by the weight of past errors. And herein lies the final justification of Christ's doctrine: we are allowed to forget only on condition that we aspire. St. Paul forgets the past only because, and as long as, he is pressing to the mark of his high calling in Christ Jesus. The sinful woman is not condemned because she sins no more. The one anodyne of past sin is the constant exertion of the soul intent upon the struggle of virtue. Relax that struggle, and all the past will rush back upon you like a desolating blackness. Consecrate yourself to that struggle, and God will permit you to forget the past; indeed, in the very act of struggling you will forget it.

¶ On the eve of Waterloo it was necessary for Napoleon to warn his soldiers that they had forced marches in front of them—they knew what he meant, for they had experienced these before,

[1] A. Shepherd, *Bible Studies in Living Subjects*, 9.
[2] W. J. Jordan, *The Crown of Individuality*, 123.

and they must be on the lookout for them again; but that was only one side of the picture, and knowing that he had come up to a turning-point and a crisis, when a decisive victory must, if possible, be won, he selected two appropriate facts out of their past and brought them forward for his purpose, deliberately omitting and forgetting other and uglier passages that were behind. "Soldiers!" he exclaimed, "this day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe." This was the way to make their blood tingle and to fire their courage; this was a picture of their power at its best, and it was this picture that must go with them into the morrow. Waterloo was to be another Friedland or Marengo.[1]

¶ George MacDonald makes one of his characters say to another, "Let bygones be bygones." "Deed no," is the reply; "what's the use of bygones but to learn from them how to meet the bycomes?" Yes, the only right use of "the bygones" is to teach us how to meet "the bycomes." If we remember our mistakes at all, let it only be to retrieve them, and organize fresh victory out of them.[2]

Where shall I hide the memories of my pain?
They lie like pictures on my spirit's walls.
I draw the curtains 'gainst the wind and rain,
But over that past world no curtain falls
To shroud the things behind.

I go to sleep, but sleep itself reveals
The phantoms of a day that long is fled,
And through the land of shadows softly steals
The figured presence of the loved and dead
To wake the things behind.

Would I not lose some glory by forgetting?
Have I not treasures drawn from days of old?
There is a sadness in the daylight's setting;
But who would miss the splendour of the gold
To part with things behind?

Keep then the gold, my soul, and hide the setting;
Thy Father shows to thee a path of peace;
Thou canst forget thy pain without forgetting
The forms and voices that can never cease
To bless the things behind.

[1] Spencer Jones, *Now and Then*, 18.
[2] S. L. Wilson, *Helpful Words for Daily Life*, 258.

Turn memory into hope, and thou shalt see
The past illumined by the future's glow;
Put forth thy hand to touch the life to be,
And thou shalt find the joys of long ago
No more the things behind.

There is a death of memory that is brought
Not by oblivion, but by coming light,—
It fades as childhood fades in manhood's thought;
It dies as starlight dies at morning's sight,
Not needing things behind.

May this forgetfulness, my heart, be thine;
Not the great deadness of an outgrown sorrow,
But the deep trust that ceases to repine,
Since yesterday shall come again to-morrow
Bearing the things behind.

Fields of the past to thee shall be no more
The burial-ground of friendships once in bloom,
But seed-plots of a harvest on before,
And prophecies of life with larger room
For things that are behind.

Live thou in God, and thy dead past shall be
Alive for ever with eternal day;
And planted on His bosom thou shalt see
The flowers revived that withered on the way
Amid the things behind.[1]

II.

St. Paul with his Eye on the Goal.

1. Here is a man who starts right away with an object in life —something to strive for, something to achieve, something worth achieving. He has a goal to which his whole existence tends. And that goal is Jesus Christ. His ruling passion is to get nearer to Jesus Christ, to be more like Jesus Christ, to grow up into Jesus Christ, to do the work of Jesus Christ. That is his dominant purpose. He aims. He gives his life a centre. He

[1] George Matheson, *Sacred Songs*, 125.

strives to bring everything—all his faculties and powers, all his experiences and activities—into relation with that centre.

"Toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The goal and the prize are not the same thing. The goal—that was to be like Christ; the prize—that was to be for ever happy with Christ. We all desire the prize; we all hope when this world fades from us, to enter into eternal joy; we all hope to be in heaven at last, with crowns on our heads, and palms in our hands, and the song of the Redeemed on our lips. And we are all pressing forward, each one on his own way, one on the way of Pride, another on the way of Ambition, another on the way of Pleasure, another on the way of Covetousness, all on the way of Selfishness. But there is only one road by which we can attain to it, the road of likeness to Christ. Like Christ? What word will sum up that likeness? The answer is *unselfishness.* Jesus Christ was the one absolutely unselfish Being; and if we would be like Him, we must learn to put off self, to crucify self, to annihilate self, to lose self in Him.

Now Paul had "seen the Lord"; and henceforth for him "to live was Christ," and to die "gain." Christ was to him both the end and the way—that is to say, his heart's desire was that he might have Christ's mind, Christ's affections, Christ's joy, for his own. If even the sight of a good man, in any field of work to which we are invited, can humble us to lift us up, how much more a true sight of Jesus Christ, in whom was no sin, in whom was all goodness. If our standard of what we should attempt, and what we would become, can be altered by our view of our neighbour's character and course, how greatly can our standard be altered and raised by our view of One who is "above all," to be blessed for ever by all? To Paul, Jesus Christ presented both that glorious moral Image to which he would be likened, and that potent moral Help by which he could attain to it. The Apostle had seen in Him the beauty and the power of God.

Have you missed in your aim? Well, the mark is still shining;
Did you faint in the race? Well, take breath for the next;
Did the clouds drive you back? But see yonder their lining;
Were you tempted and fell? Let it serve for a text.

As each year hurries by, let it join that procession
Of skeleton shapes that march down to the past,
While you take your place in the line of progression,
With your eyes on the heavens, your face to the blast.
I tell you the future can hold no terrors
For any sad soul while the stars revolve,
If he will but stand firm on the grave of his errors,
And instead of regretting, resolve, resolve!
It is never too late to begin rebuilding,
Though all into ruins your life seems hurled.
For look! how the light of a new day is gilding
The worn, wan face of the bruised old world.[1]

2. The Apostle's gaze was not only onward but also upward. What attracted him was the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. He saw the crown, the crown of life that fadeth not away, hanging bright before his eyes. What, said he, shall tempt me from that path of which yon crown is the end? Let the golden apples be thrown in my way; I cannot even look at them or stay to spurn them with my feet. Let the sirens sing on either side, and seek to charm me with their evil beauty, to leave the holy road; but I must not, and I will not. The end is glorious; what if the running be laborious? When there is such a prize to be had, who will grudge a struggle?

¶ Whymper, in his *Scrambles Amongst the Alps*, says that when you are on the summit of Mont Blanc "you look down upon the rest of Europe. There is nothing to look up to; all is below; there is no one point for the eye to rest upon. The man who is there is somewhat in the position of one who has attained all that he desires—he has nothing to aspire to; his position must needs be unsatisfactory. But upon the summit of the Verte there is not this objection. You see valleys, villages, fields; you see mountains interminable rolling away, lakes resting in their hollows; you hear the tinkling of the sheep-bells as it rises through the clear morning air, and the roar of the avalanches as they descend to the valleys; but, above all, there is the great white dome, with its shining crest high above, with its sparkling glaciers, that descend between buttresses which support them; with its brilliant snows, purer and yet purer the farther they are removed from this sinful world."

3. The climax and fulfilment of Christian hope are in Jesus

[1] Ella W. Wilcox.

Christ. What the Apostle coveted was the prize of the high calling of God *in Christ Jesus*. The "calling" exists before the race begins. It is the invitation, the sanction, the authority by which the race is begun, the goal fixed, and the prize awarded. "The *high* calling" is called in the Epistle to the Hebrews "the *heavenly* calling." The phrase implies that this calling comes from, and leads to, the highest sphere to which man can attain. It is man's highest ideal, and he cannot attain to anything beyond it. And this highest possibility for man is treasured up in Jesus Christ; for it is the "high calling of God *in Christ Jesus*."

The prize is granted when the goal is reached; and all our powers are given us that we may reach the goal. Force of character is ours for the sake of what it may enable us to accomplish; to rest content with being Christians is to sacrifice the end of the Christian calling in delight with the sufficiency of the means. Out of all our satisfactions there comes a lofty discontent. The power of saintliness opens the heart to saintly longings; the impulse of Christian self-sacrifice is an impulse to a definite end. A satisfying religious faith, a sufficient religious purpose—these are the noblest gifts of God to man on earth; but there is more beyond. The purpose is to be accomplished, the trust is to be fulfilled; and it is given to each of us to aid in the consummation.

¶ Theodore Cuyler tells how with some friends he once ascended Mount Washington by the old trail over the slippery rocks. A weary, disappointed company they were when they reached the cabin on the summit, and found it shut in by the clouds. But towards evening a mighty wind swept away the banks of mist, the body of the blue heavens stood out in its clearness, and before them was revealed the magnificent landscape, stretching away to the Atlantic Ocean. So faith's stairways are often over steep and slippery rocks, often through blinding storms; but if Christ dwell in the heart, God never loses His hold of us, and in due time He brings us out into the clear shining after rain. To such a career the growing years only bring nearer the triumph, the supreme victory of our lives.

III.

St. Paul with his Might in the Race.

1. Christian perfection can be reached only by definite and strenuous endeavour. Faith and purpose are furnished us to

animate our efforts; they will never be accepted as substitutes for performance. An ignoble contentment with imperfection often clothes itself in the garb of piety; the mystery of spiritual growth is pleaded as an excuse for inactivity; quietism is regarded as a more reverent response than effort to the provisions of the gospel. The same indolent trust in change which makes the inexperienced youth fancy that new companionships and new circumstances are all that is needed for his reformation makes many a man think that death is the spiritual perfecter. But how has all past Christian progress been attained? Not by a barren confidence in the unknown resources of God, but by "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling." It is impossible to make a man good who will not endeavour to be good. Equally impossible is it to give him blessedness. You cannot make him permanently happy who will not secure his own happiness by efforts to be good. The more you do for him, the more exacting and the more feeble he becomes. Rousing himself for worthy ends, his feebleness and exactingness are gone; the freshness of new interests breathes joy around him.

¶ "Stretching forward to the things that are before." The word here used is an exceedingly strong word. It means not merely "reaching forth," but "stretching forth," implying intense and sustained effort. The word used is a very strong compound word, so compounded as to give it a maximum of force. It is a picture of the runner as he "stretches forward," with the intensity of his effort, every fibre stretched towards the goal.[1]

I count this thing to be grandly true,
That a noble deed is a step toward God,
Lifting the soul from the common clod
To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of good or gain,
By the pride deposed and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.

2. There must be a concentration of all the faculties on the great end of life. Much that is desirable in itself has to be subordinated to the supreme purpose. Paul said: "This one thing I do."

[1] J. Thomas, *Myrtle Street Pulpit*, iii. 202.

¶ Take him for all in all, Spencer was intellectually one of the grandest and morally one of the noblest men that have ever lived. His life was devoted to a single purpose—the establishing of truth and righteousness as he understood them. The value of a life of self-sacrifice for a lofty ideal is inestimable at all times, and is especially so in the present day of advertisement, push, and getting on in the world. This will endure whatever may be the fate of his philosophical opinions. "In the whole story of the searchers for truth," said the *Times*, just after his death, "there is no instance of devotion to noble aims surpassing his — courage, baffling ill-health and proof against years of discouragement, unwearied patience, wise economy of powers, and confidence in the future recognition of the value of his work."[1]

¶ In a letter written by Whitefield to a friend on the day of his ordination, occurs the following sublime and comprehensive yet simple expression: "I hope the good of souls will be my only principle of action. I call heaven and earth to witness, that when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up like a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me."

3. Endeavour and concentration will ensure steady progress. "I press on," says Paul. There is an almost breathless ardour in the words. We could imagine a sculptor fashioning a figure suggested by this expression. It would be a form with head outstretched; with eyes wide open, straining the sight to catch a glimpse of the distant goal; with hands clenched; with one foot stretched forward, while the other but lightly touched the ground; with the muscles standing out from the flesh like ropes—such a statue is suggested by the phrase, "I press on."[2]

¶ "Having decided what was to be done," observes Emerson of Napoleon, "he did that with might and main. He put out all his strength. He risked everything and spared nothing—neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself."

One look behind; but not for idle dreaming;
Hope beckons on to heights that greet the sky;
While voices speak of Time's brief hours redeeming,
To nerve the heart for toil and victory.

[1] D. Duncan, *The Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, 511.
[2] H. Windross, *The Life Victorious*, 250.

One look behind; it may be one of sorrow,
O'er broken vows, and duties left undone;
But wait, my soul, on God; then, with each morrow,
His strength'ning grace receive thy race to run.

One look behind; but not for vain regretting
O'er golden hours that soothed life's fret and care;
Forward! be still thy cry, the past forgetting,
Save that which bears thee up on wings of prayer.

One look behind; sweet mercy's path reviewing;
One goal ahead, one faith, one hope above;
Up then, with pilgrim staff heaven's way pursuing,
To reach the radiant home of endless love![1]

[1] J. P. Wood.

Citizenship in Heaven.

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CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.

For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation (A.V., our vile body), that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.—Phil. iii. 20, 21.

1. ST. PAUL, in these words, is strengthening the Christians at Philippi, by setting before them the greatness of their calling and of their destiny. They had much need of encouragement; for a time of sore and peculiar trial was then upon them. They had to endure not only bitter persecutions and the assault of Antichrists, wielding the powers of the world to wear out the saints of the Most High, but a still more dangerous, because more subtle, trial. They were being tried by false and sensual men mingling in the communion of the Church. There were among them false teachers, who mixed up the law of Moses with the gospel of Christ; double-minded men, steering between both; striving to escape persecution, and yet desiring to obtain the reputation of Christians. These were very dangerous tempters, who entered the Church in disguise, defiling it, and destroying souls for whom Christ died.

There was one special mark by which such men (as we see from both St. Paul and St. John) might be known; they lived evil lives. Therefore St. Paul here sets before the Philippians a contrast of carnal and spiritual Christians, and of the earthly and the heavenly life. After saying, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"; he adds, "For our citizenship is in heaven."

St. Paul draws a contrast between the principle that animated

the lives of these sensual worldlings and the principle that animated his own life and the lives of his fellow-Christians. *They* "mind earthly things." "*Our* citizenship is in heaven." They have their view bounded by the earthly horizon; they believe in and live for what they can see and touch and taste—for what St. John so significantly describes as "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye and the vain glory of life." The controlling influences which mould our lives are heavenly. The country of our allegiance is above. We draw our inspiration from the recollection of it.

¶ No line of modern poetry has been oftener quoted with thoughtless acceptance than Wordsworth's:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy.

It is wholly untrue in the implied limitation; if life be led under heaven's law, the sense of heaven's nearness only deepens with advancing years, and is assured in death. But the saying is indeed true thus far, that in the dawn of virtuous life every enthusiasm and every perception may be trusted as of Divine appointment; and the *maxima reverentia* is due not only to the innocence of children, but to their inspiration. And it follows that through the ordinary course of mortal failure and misfortune, in the career of nations no less than of men, the error of their intellect, and the hardening of their hearts, may be accurately measured by their denial of spiritual power.[1]

2. The Apostle chooses a most appropriate figure. This letter of St. Paul to the Philippian Christians was written to the inhabitants of a Roman colony, or free city, such as Philippi was. Its inhabitants would, therefore, fully understand the figure of the Apostle when he called upon them to remember their high position as citizens, not of a mere mundane sovereignty, but of a Heavenly Kingdom. "Our citizenship is in heaven." Was the Roman citizen a free man—so were they. They had been "made free from sin, and become servants to God"; they were therefore to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free." Had the Roman citizen acquired his freedom by purchase—so had they; they had been "redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Did the Roman citizen enjoy immunity from the

[1] Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, viii., Letter 92 (*Works*, xxix. 457).

fear that hath torment, conscious that the law had no terrors for him so long as he used it lawfully—so was it with these Philippian Christians; as long as they were "led by the Spirit they were not under the law"; "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made them free from the law of sin and death." Was the Roman citizen enfranchised by virtue of adoption into the family of his master—so was it with them; they had received "the adoption of sons," whereby they were able to cry, "Abba, Father." Had the Roman citizen a right of personal access to the Emperor, and an appeal to his righteous judgment—so had they the right of entry before the King of kings; they might "draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Was the Roman citizen a member of the greatest of earthly empires—the Philippian Christian was more than this, he was a citizen of heaven, and a subject of "the only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting."

¶ The term used by Paul has nothing to do with what we in the present day commonly mean by conversation (the word used in the Authorized Version), that is, talking. It means rather our life, that is, not the way of life in which we choose to live, but the state of life for which God made us, to which we belong, whether we choose it or not. More plainly still, it is the country or nation or city of which we are members and citizens, in which we are natives. It is that city of Jerusalem above, of which St. Paul writes to the Galatians, which is the mother of us all, the city of God. We belong to a great commonwealth, and that commonwealth is in heaven. Not we *shall* belong, but we *do now* belong to the heavenly commonwealth. This is not some slight or accidental honour added to our life. It is the very frame and truth of our life itself. We belong to it first and foremost, not by an afterthought. Heaven comes first, not earth. We are first citizens of heaven, and last citizens of heaven, and citizens of heaven all the while between: earth comes in only by the way; it has no deep and lasting rights over us.[1]

¶ Not only have the words, "Our conversation is in heaven," lost for thousands of readers their original English meaning, but they had never conveyed the real point of St. Paul's phrase with its quite definite reference to a political Citizenship or Common-

[1] F. J. A. Hort, *Village Sermons*, 2nd Ser., 151.

wealth or Empire. A Roman citizen, proud—we see it again and again in the story of his life—proud of his privilege, is in custody at Rome waiting his trial by the Emperor. The whole conditions of that trial turned upon his citizenship, and he is writing to men and women in an enrolled Roman Colony—Philippi—who were hardly less proud than he of their Roman citizenship, their fellowship in the Imperial capital of the world.

What he says is, Some Christians, even in these testing days, have been lowering the Christian ideal. They are easy-going or even sensual and self-indulgent. That ought, for us, members of Christ's Commonwealth, citizens of His Kingdom, to be impossible. For we have learned better, our link of fellowship is an ennobling thing; it uplifts, it steadies us. "Our citizenship is in heaven."[1]

I.

The City to which we Belong.

1. We belong to a city or state, which is out of sight. St. John, in the last great prophecy given through him to the Church, saw that city, builded four-square, perfect every way, on twelve foundations, having in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. It was built at unity with itself, perfect in structure and in symmetry, its length as great as its breadth; its walls of all manner of precious stones, and its streets of pure gold, clear as glass: a wonderful vision, full of mystery, and of meaning partly revealed, partly hidden, and by hiding made even more glorious and majestic. It sets before us the unity, multitude, perfection, glory, and bliss, of Christ's saints gathered under Him in the Kingdom of God. Of this city and company, the whole Church on earth, and, in it, the Christians in Philippi, were citizens and partakers. St. Paul tells them this, to remind them that they were no longer isolated one from another, but incorporated into one body. Sin, as it rends man from God, so it rends man from man. It is the antagonist of all unity—a power of dissolution and of isolation. But the grace of Christ, by its first gift, binds again the soul of man with God, and the spirits of all the regenerate in one fellowship. We are taken out of a dead world, to be grafted into the living Church. Therefore St. Paul told the

[1] Archbishop Davidson, *The Christian Opportunity*, 41.

Christians in Ephesus, that they were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They were thereby made subjects and servants of the King of saints, the Lord of the holy city. It became their own inheritance. Its courts were their resting-places, pledged to them and sure. Their names were written among those who should walk in the light of God and of the Lamb.

¶ An American agent or ambassador has a temporary dwelling in Athens. Living on that foreign soil, occupied daily, for the time, with its local affairs, respectful to its institutions, a good neighbour, he never forgets his allegiance to a distant republic. The landscape about him may show a beauty that wins his admiration; the Greek faces and manners and hospitalities may gain his good-will; yet they are not those of his native land. He remembers that his stay is short; sometimes he is homesick; he expects to be called back, not long hence, where his treasure is laid up and his untravelled heart abides; he is a stranger and sojourner, away from home. This simple comparison answers the better because it shows that when our faith commands us to have our conversation in heaven it does not require us to be bad citizens of the world where we now are. We are not bidden to be absent-minded; if we were we should do poor work here, and lead ineffectual lives. The man may form hearty attachments where he tarries; he may pay willing tribute to the city that temporarily befriends him; he may live cheerfully and helpfully, neither a complaining guest nor a fastidious and sullen recluse. And yet, none the less, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so grandly says of the patriarch who is the type of the Christian believer, he desires always a better country, which he knows—a "city" first in his honour, dearer to his love, and always in his hopes. So Christ, by His doctrine and spirit, reconciles a regular and happy labour among the fields and streets and markets of this world with a constant recollection that we have an eternal citizenship above it.[1]

¶ Are we not strangers here? Is it not strange that we so often meet and part without a word of our home, or the way to it, or our advance toward it?[2]

2. Citizenship implies honour and privilege. Both in Rome and in its colonies the privileges of citizenship were great, and greatly prized. Rome was the centre and mistress of the civilized

[1] F. D. Huntingdon, *Christ in the Christian Year*, 243.
[2] Archbishop Leighton.

world. The Roman citizen was not only safe wherever he went, but honoured and admired. He held himself to be the equal of tributary princes and kings, if not their superior. He was eligible for the highest offices of the State. He had a voice in the election of the ministers and rulers of the Commonwealth, even up to the godlike Imperator himself. He was exempted from many burdens, taxes, benevolences, exactions, imposed on the subject races. He could neither be scourged uncondemned nor examined by torture. Even if found guilty of the foulest crime, he could no more be crucified than an Englishman could be impaled; while, if he were cast in any civil suit, he had a right of appeal to Cæsar. If he were a man of any energy and intelligence, he had boundless opportunities of acquiring wealth; if he were poor and indolent, bread and games were provided for him at the public expense, baths were built for him, and theatres; the public gardens and walks were open to him; he might enrol himself among the clients, and so secure the protection, of some wealthy and powerful noble; he could take his share in the imperial doles and largesses, which were of constant recurrence. All this he might do and claim, not as a favour, but as a right, simply because he was a citizen.

What St. Paul virtually says to the Christian citizens of Philippi is: "You possess, and are proud to possess, the citizenship of Rome; but, remember, you have a still higher and nobler citizenship. Heaven is your true home, the Kingdom of Heaven your true commonwealth, the spirit of heaven your true spirit. You are members of that great spiritual and eternal Kingdom of which *Christ* is Imperator and Lord. And this citizenship confers on you both rights and duties—rights of access and appeal to the heavenly King, exemption not from base punishments alone, but also from base and degrading lusts. You are guarded from the malice and violence of the principalities and powers of evil and of an evil world. You are fed and cherished by the bounty and grace of the King eternal, immortal, invisible. You owe Him allegiance therefore, and a constant heartfelt service. Take pride in Him, then, and in the ties that bind you to Him. Fight for your privileges and immunities; play the man; prove yourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Assert and maintain your spiritual freedom. Subordinate your private interests to the public wel-

fare. Labour to extend the borders of the Divine Kingdom. Let this heavenly citizenship be more and dearer to you than the civic rights and exemptions in which you are wont to boast."

¶ On a cold, windy day in November, a gentleman spoke kindly to a poor Italian whom he had often passed without a word. Seeing him shiver, he said something about the dreadful English climate, which to a son of the sunny south must have seemed terribly cruel that day. But to his surprise the man looked up with a smile, and in his broken English said, "Yes, yes, pritty cold; but by-and-by! tink of dat." He was thinking of warm skies and flowers and songs in the sunny land to which he hoped soon to return, and he little imagined how all that day and for many a day his words would ring in the Englishman's heart: "By-and-by, tink of dat."[1]

3. There were three ways by which a person obtained "citizenship." The first was by *birth*. If a person was born in a city, he was free to the rights and privileges which belonged to that city. He was "a citizen." Thus St. Paul said, "I was free born." And every Christian has had two births, a natural and also a spiritual birth. The second mode of becoming a "citizen" was by *gift*. It was a privilege, in the power of a State, then as it is now, to confer, and was sometimes conferred, in honour or in love. And thirdly it could be *bought*. As we read: "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, Art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born." By all these three privileges every Christian has got his freedom, or "citizenship." He is "born again" of water and of the Spirit. It has been purchased for him at no less a price than the blood of the Son of God. And it is bestowed upon him by the will and bounty of the King of kings.

¶ In Switzerland and Germany people have what they call a *Heimatschein*—a certificate of home. This is necessary as a passport; without it they cannot leave their country, and would be liable at any moment to be imprisoned because unable to prove themselves members of a canton. A peasant girl was one day watching the bears at Berne, and let slip out of her hands a bag containing some homely treasures. The bag fell into the bears den, and one by one they pulled out the articles contained in it

[1] Alfred Rowland.

and destroyed them. The girl wept for a while, and then put her hand into her bosom and drew out thence her certificate of home, exclaiming with joy, "Thank God! the bears have not got this." In the sealing of God's Spirit we have the certificate of our heavenly home, and no one can take it from us—the freedom of heaven is ours for ever.[1]

4. Heavenly citizenship is a present possession and confers lasting benefit. The heaven of which St. Paul speaks must indeed belong most truly to the far distant future; if it did not, what would be the meaning of the hopes of a better world which lie so deep in all our hearts? But it must be a heaven which is not only above us, but with us now, all our lives through; and it must be a heaven which can have no charm for those who are besotted with the things of eye and palate and touch. And, if so, God Himself, and nothing lower than God, must be the very heart and life of the true heaven, St. Paul's heaven. We could not more truly describe it than by saying that it is the presence of God. Where He is, there is heaven: and where He is not, there is hell. Our common thoughts of heaven are not too high or too happy; on the contrary they are too poor and mean. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

¶ The only proof of a future heaven is the present heaven constituted by the indwelling of Christ in a man's own soul. The citizen of heaven carries his credentials with him. His passport is God's writing upon his heart. The assurance that heaven shall be ours is not to be found in an other-worldliness which ignores the present, but in the effort to make the heaven within shed its light abroad and so transform the earth into its likeness.[2]

¶ "If thou art a believer," said John Eliot, the apostle of the Indians in the seventeenth century, "thou art no stranger to heaven while thou livest; and when thou diest, heaven will be no strange place to thee; no, thou hast been there a thousand times before." "The soul of man," wrote Sir Thomas Browne, "may be in heaven anywhere, even within the limits of his own proper body; and when it ceaseth to live in the body, it may remain in its own soul, that is its Creator." "Thy joys of heaven will begin," wrote Theodore Parker, "as soon as we attain the character of heaven, and do its duties; that may begin to-day; it is everlasting life to

[1] A. C. Price, *Fifty Sermons*, xi. 270.
[2] A. H. Strong, *Miscellanies*, ii. 172.

know God, to have His Spirit dwelling in you, yourself at one with Him." [1]

5. We must live as becomes citizens of heaven. The secret of a heavenly life on earth is to do the common everyday works of ordinary men, but to do them in an uncommon spirit, to do them in a spirit of intense and continual devotion to God; whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God. Parents are to teach their children that they may be fitted to do what God shall call them to. Masters are to rule their households as if they were looking after souls put into their charge by God. Servants are to do their work heartily, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as unto the Lord. Men of business, merchants, tradesmen are to set themselves to gather wealth, that they may have more to spend for God. Kings and those in authority are to govern so as to encourage peace, order, and religion. Every power of body and mind, every advantage we possess, our rank and place, our name and station, our influence over others, the charm of winning manners, skill in any art (be it music, or painting, or any other), the gift of noble birth, or situations of authority, all these are to be rendered unto God, used earnestly, honestly, sincerely, in making Him more known, loved, and obeyed.

¶ Dante, in his "Divine Comedy," caught the substance of the truth when he made the angels who in heaven are nearest to God to be engaged at the same time in lowly ministration to the needy on earth. Dante only interpreted Jesus' words: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." To be a citizen of heaven, therefore, implies active service to every good cause, the betterment of all social conditions, the sending of the gospel to the heathen nations, the effort to bring to the knowledge of the truth our families, our communities, and all mankind. To be a citizen of heaven is, like Christ, to realize heaven in our own souls, and then to establish it outside of us by going about and doing good.[2]

(1) We should cheerfully obey the laws of heaven. According to the Apostle, the standard of our living, and its sanctions, and its way of thinking and proceeding, and, in a word, our city, with its interests and its objects, being in heaven, the earnest business

[1] W. Sinclair. [2] A. H. Strong, *Miscellanies*, ii. 170.

of our life is there. We have to do with earth constantly and in ways most various; but, as Christians, our way of having to do with the earth itself is heavenly, and is to be conversant with heaven. What we mainly love and seek is in heaven; what we listen most to hear is the voice that comes from heaven; what we most earnestly speak is the voice we send to heaven; what lies next our heart is the treasure and the hope which are secure in heaven; what we are most intent upon is what we lay up in heaven, and how we are getting ready for heaven; there is One in heaven whom we love above all others; we are children of the kingdom of heaven; it is our country and our home; and something in us refuses to settle on those things here that reject the stamp of heaven.

¶ The great states of old had their strongly-defined popular characteristics. Athens was learned. Sparta was brave. Corinth was luxurious. What is to be the strongly-marked feature of those who belong to the Christian commonwealth? Why, expressed in one word, it is holiness. "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation." Priests in His temple, our robes should be clean. Soldiers in His service, our arms should be bright. Saints in His earthly courts, we should bring no spots to our feasts of charity. Having hope of admission to the city of the living God, we should purify ourselves even as He is pure. And thus God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven.

(2) We should carry the atmosphere of heaven wherever we go.

¶ We read that in certain climates of the world the gales that spring from the land carry a refreshing smell far out to sea, and tell the watchful pilot that he is approaching some desirable and fruitful coast for which he has been waiting, when as yet he cannot discern it with his eyes. Just in the same way it fares with those who have steadily and loyally followed the course which God has pointed out to them. We sometimes find that they are filled with peace, hope, and happiness, which, like those refreshing breezes and reviving odours to the seaman, are breathed forth from Paradise upon their souls, and give them to understand with certainty that God is bringing them into their desired haven.

¶ I remember Mr. Gladstone, some fifteen or twenty years ago, giving commendation to a little instrument then devised for the enrichment of the vocal organs. It was a form of inhaler, and by some happy combination of elements it was supposed to

enswathe the vocal chords with the fine, enriching air of Italy. It is possible for our mind and soul to do their work in the sweet, clear air of heaven. We can be breathing mountain air even while we are trudging through the valley. And this air, after all, is our native air; when we are away from this we are in circumstances that poison, and vitiate, and destroy. But we can exercise the privileges of a higher citizenship, and we can "draw in breath in the fear of the Lord."[1]

(3) If heaven is our true home, we shall find our delight in learning more about it. Our hearts will be centred there.

¶ Some years ago a traveller who had recently returned from Jerusalem, was in the society of Humboldt, and was greatly astonished to find that the old philosopher knew as much about the streets and houses in Jerusalem as he did himself. He asked Humboldt how long it was since he had visited Jerusalem, and received this reply: "I have never been there, but I expected to go sixty years since, and I prepared myself." Should not the heaven to which we expect to go be just as familiar to us, so far at least as what the Bible has told us of it is concerned?[2]

¶ The progressive apprehension of the Divine idea must be closely connected with the hope of its fuller manifestation, and to one who is full of sympathy with his fellow-men, the most welcome manifestation would be in the political life of mankind. . . . In the days when, not in fancy but in sober seriousness, Vane built his splendid political theories, and Cromwell seemed about to embody them in act, when even the common people saw the dominion of the saints at hand, Milton might well "see in his mind's eye a noble and puissant nation rousing itself, like a strong man after sleep," and even rise in thought from the perfection of earthly politics to the city of the heavenly host. But it is hard for men who are versed in political theories which have all been found wanting, and whose eyes are dimmed with the dust that rises from the hubbub of modern life, to see the history of mankind "orbing itself to a perfect end."[3]

II.

The King whose Coming we Await.

1. The spiritual commonwealth must have a head; the city must have a King. Now Jesus Christ sits in the place of power:

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Feb. 28, 1907.
[2] A. C. Price, *Fifty Sermons*, xi. 271.
[3] *Thomas Hill Green*, 31.

He holds the reins of government. And we look to Him to come, according to His promise, to remove present disabilities and bring us into the full enjoyment of our privileges. "From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The expectation of the coming of Christ out of the world of supreme truth and purity, where God is known and served aright, to fulfil all His promises,—this is the Church's and the believer's great hope. It is set before us in the New Testament as a motive to every duty, as giving weight to every warning, as determining the attitude and character of all Christian life. In particular, we cannot deal aright with any of the earthly things committed to us, unless we deal with them in the light of Christ's expected coming. This expectation is to enter into the heart of every believer, and no one is warranted to overlook or make light of it. His coming, His appearing, the revelation of Him, the revelation of His glory, the coming of His day, and so forth, are pressed on us continually. In a true waiting for the day of Christ is gathered up the right regard to what He did and bore when He came first, and also a right regard to Him as He is now the pledge and the sustainer of our soul's life: the one and the other are to pass onward to the hope of His appearing.

¶ Whenever you are met by those enigmas of life which perplex many of our deepest thinkers in these days, remember "the Promise of His Coming"! "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "Be ye therefore patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness." Say unto God, "O how wonderful art Thou in Thy works! How wonderful it will be to see this enigma solved—this perplexing aspect of Thy dealings made plain—this mystery of iniquity explained! How glorious will it be to see order and law, instead of a lawless world; angels and archangels, principalities and powers, in a wonderful order; loving to obey, or ruling with temperate and loving discipline!"

"O the majesty of law!" was the thought of the great theologian Hooker, when he was dying. When those around him asked him what he was looking forward to, he said: "I look forward to seeing law and order reigning everywhere, in the new Kingdom of God." When iniquity seems to abound, and the Church is divided, and heresies are increasing, then look up and

say: "O my Lord, I know that Thou art coming; for Thou didst foretell this. Thou didst say that when Thy Advent should be drawing near, the faith of Thy Church would hardly exist; that the love of many would wax cold. Thou hast told me that evil will never be crushed, until the Day dawn, and, instead of the withering blight of the dark shadow of Death, there shall be seen the light and the glory of Thy Advent Kingdom. O come then, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!" And when you cannot think or feel or pray, or realize anything, or care about anything, at least *be true*. Do not say words to God that you do not mean. Be silent, but kneel down and worship; or simply say: "O God, help me to say, Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"[1]

2. This brings us face to face with the great motive of a true Christian life—*devotion to a person*, the person of Him who is our Redeemer and our King. This is the great secret of loyalty to the city of God. It is not loyalty to an idea however lofty, to a system however beneficent, to a society however Divine, for the loyal Christian is the man who loves the city because he loves its Lord, and who seeks the good of the city because he believes that thus, and thus alone, can he

Fulfil the boundless purpose of our King.

¶ You remember the old story of the Scottish knight, with the king's heart in a golden casket, who, beset by crowds of dusky, turbaned unbelievers, slung the precious casket into the serried ranks of the enemy, and with the shout, "Lead on, brave heart; I follow thee!" cast himself into the thickest of the fight, and lost his life that he might save it. And so, if we have Christ before us, we shall count no path too perilous that leads us to Him, but rather, hearing Him say, "If any man serve me, let him follow me," we shall walk in His footsteps and fight the good fight, sustained by His example.[2]

¶ It seems to me as if, were I a layman in the days when some doctrine had got loose, as it were, into the wind and was being blown across the common and up and down the streets, I should go to church on Sunday, not wanting my minister to give me an oracular answer to all the questions which had been stated about it, but hoping that out of his sermon I might refresh my knowledge of Christ, get Him, His nature, His work, and His desire for me once more clear before me, and go out more ready to see this disputed truth of the moment in His light and as an

[1] Bishop G. H. Wilkinson, *For Quiet Moments*, 10. [2] A. Maclaren.

utterance of Him. . . . *Preaching Christ?* That old phrase, which has been so often the very watchword of cant, how it still declares the true nature of Christian teaching! Not Christianity, but Christ! Not a doctrine but a Person! Christianity only for Christ! The doctrine only for the Person.[1]

3. The King can accomplish through the organized commonwealth more than he could accomplish by separate individuals. There are scientific museums where you may see a jar of water, another filled with charcoal, a bottle of lime, another with phosphorus and so forth. These, you are told, are the constituents of a human body. These are the materials out of which a body is made up. But in which of them do we find the properties of flesh and blood, to say nothing of the wonderful gifts, the marvellous endowments, of those bodies which God has given us. In a similar way a community of Christian men and women, knowing what is good, believing what is true, living pure lives, and breathing the spirit of heaven, would be not merely an aggregation of Christian people, but a Christian city distinctly different in its corporate life and corporate action from a city composed of equally able citizens who know nothing about Christ. They would be able to spread enlightenment, and to promote peace and happiness which would make their city a foretaste of that which shall never pass away. Noble deeds have been done when a thought or an emotion has taken possession of a community. What might we not hope for from a single city filled with Divine enthusiasm and moved by the spirit of God.

¶ The poet Cowper saw in the rapid growth of England's power, even in his day, the earnest of a world-wide rule far eclipsing that of Rome. You remember how he pictures "the British warrior-queen," who has suffered direct indignity at the hands of the Roman conquerors, consulting "the Druid, hoary chief," as to her country's wrongs, and listening to the "burning words" in which he portrayed, not only the destined fall of Rome, but also the future glory of her own land. Cowper was a patriot as well as a poet, jealous of England's liberties, conscious of England's destiny, anxious for England's good, and in "Boadicea" he claims that all who bear the name of Briton are inheritors of a more than Roman empire, and (let us not forget) of a more than Roman responsibility.[2]

[1] *Phillips Brooks*, 126. [2] T. W. Drury, *The Prison-Ministry of St. Paul*, 44.

4. Yet Christ reaches and moves society through the individual. The Saviour did not publish a plan of political reform, or a schedule of social science. Meeting His countrymen in little groups, or one by one, as they came, He showed them what was in His heart, and showed them the ineffable beauty of a holy and blessed "conversation" with His Father, while they were yet fishermen and publicans, and reapers and water-carriers, about their houses and fields. So began the everlasting empire and the everlasting age of righteousness through love, which was in time to lift itself over the palaces at Constantinople and Rome. Before men knew it, He had planted a kingdom to fill and possess the earth—planted it just where alone it could be planted, in the living heart and will of certain individuals who had ceased minding earthly things, or minded heavenly things far more. And so, precisely, He meets us to-day. With all His spirit of sacrifice and mighty power of redemption, with the cross on His shoulders and the scar in His side, He comes to each one of us, and speaks.

¶ Individuals, feeling strongly, while on the one hand they are incidentally faulty in mode or language, are still peculiarly effective. No great work was done by a system; whereas systems rise out of individual exertions. Luther was an individual. The very faults of an individual excite attention; he loses, but his cause (if good and he powerful-minded) gains. This is the way of things: we promote truth by a self-sacrifice.[1]

¶ Christianity has done more to produce individuality, and the development of personality, than any other force that has appeared in the world. It has accomplished what paganism had never succeeded in doing. "Even when we reach the climax of ancient civilization, in Greece and Rome, there is no adequate sense, either in theory or practice, of human personality as such." That is the dictum of Dr. Illingworth—no mean authority on the subject. He does not scruple to affirm that "the advent of Christianity created a new epoch both in the development and recognition of human personality." This, he asserts, is "a point of history which admits of no denial." And if any would inquire how it was brought about that this new sense of the worth of living, this quickened appreciation of the value of every individual with all that is involved of interest in life and its conditions, took possession of Christians, as it undoubtedly did, the answer that has to be given is wonderful enough. "As dying, and behold, we live."

[1] Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 111.

"I live, yet not I." It was the result, not of conscious self-culture, but of deliberate self-sacrifice. The less they considered self, the more freely they spent themselves in the service of their Master and His cause, the more fully and vividly they became aware of an inward transformation, of a deepened and heightened consciousness of enlarged sympathy and increased power; they were already entering into life.[1]

III.

The Change that will come over our Body.

1. When Christ comes He will transfigure our bodies. St. Paul might have dwelt on many great blessings the full meaning of which will be unfolded when Christ comes; for He is to conform all things to Himself. But St. Paul prefers to signalize what shall befall our bodies; for that makes us feel that not one element in our state shall fail to be subjected to the victorious energy of Christ. Our bodies are, in our present state, conspicuously refractory to the influences of the higher kingdom. Regeneration makes no improvement on them. In our body we carry about with us what seems to mock the idea of an ethereal and ideal life. And when we die, the corruption of the grave speaks of anything but hope. Here, then, in this very point the salvation of Christ shall complete its triumph, saving us all over and all through. He "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory."

The doctrine of the resurrection corresponds to the mysterious duality of human nature. The body is, after all, the home of the soul, endeared, even like the actual home, by the very sorrows that have been endured within it; and we can conceive of nothing entered upon in separation from it that is worthy to be called life. It has not entered into our hearts to conceive what God shall fashion for them that love Him. It is enough that when that which is perfect is come, that which was in part shall be done away. As we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. All our purified powers and faculties will harmonize with their transfigured expression.

[1] A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 139.

By the influx of Christ's endless life, the soul shall be endued with a symbol and instrument conformed to the glory of its Redeemer. Yet even then, looking back in remembrance, each saint will confess: "It was good for me that I was humiliated."

¶ The meaning that St. Paul has in his mind, and expresses in the language of the Greek, is this—Christ shall change the temporary fashion of the body of our humiliation into the abiding form of His glory. There are two conceptions of the body. The body of humiliation wears only a temporary fashion, whereas the body of glory wears an abiding form; and the work of the Lord Jesus is to stamp upon the body of our low estate, which only for a time bears the marks of its low estate, the abiding, the eternal form of the body of His glory. That is the Christian view of the body. How profound it is, and how continually it has been overlooked. The mere fact that our translators originally used that form "our vile body," is in itself a proof of the way in which the true view of the body had been overlooked, and was overlooked for so many ages. In the earliest times when men began to think, they were conscious of the difficulties that arose owing to the limitations which their bodily weakness imposed upon them. As soon as human thought turned into a moral system at all, men were divided into two classes of thinkers embodied in the old systems of the Epicureans and the Stoics—those who allowed their body to master them, and those who determined to master their body. The latter school attempted to accomplish their object by despising and condemning the body as something low and essentially degraded. That idea lived long; and that idea was in the minds of our translators when they shortened St. Paul's language and used the form of "our vile body" as being the obvious antithesis to "his glorious body." In so doing they omitted, they had not before them, the true Christian conception of the body and its place.[1]

¶ It must have required some courage, in a time when more and more the stern Roman spirit was being affected by Greek modes of thought, to hint at humiliation in connexion with the human body. Look at that Apollo, with his exquisite limbs and perfect features, unruffled with care, untouched by pain, transplanted, as it were, from another world, and by absolute right taking up the soil of anything lesser, crushing out anything less developed, drawing in all pleasures of sensuality and voluptuousness of life into the fuller development of perfect symmetry! Look at the builders of the Parthenon, and then talk of a body of humiliation!

[1] Bishop Mandell Creighton.

Look at the athletes in their games, with those splendid muscles and splendid limbs! Look at the Epicureans, in the full flight of unbridled satisfaction! What place is there here for humiliation?[1]

(1) *The needs of the body impose certain limitations on the soul.*—Improve the social order as we may, this world will remain a hard, stern place, a valley of humiliation for most of its inhabitants. We submit to our daily drudgery as a matter of course. We have no alternative. We have been drilled into it by the patient toil of a hundred generations. We even learn to say, "Blessed be drudgery." But sometimes, as we consider God's lilies which toil not neither spin, and His birds which have neither storehouse nor barn, the thought dawns upon us that to eat bread in the sweat of the brow is not the permanent destiny of sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

(2) *The infirmities and pains of the body form part of our humiliation.*—We can trace little direct connexion between a man's misdeeds and his sicknesses and sufferings. Disease and decay come upon the holiest saints, as surely as they visit the worst sinners. No optimist "gospel of healthy-mindedness" can ever persuade us that we are not part of a groaning and travailing creation. We are made subject unto vanity against our will. And sooner or later the final humiliation lies in wait for us, one by one. As Pascal said: "The last act is always tragedy: *On mourra seul*"—"we shall die alone."

(3) *The body hides and isolates the spirit.*—It hinders complete expression. The lover finds no words to utter his tenderness. The artist has no power to portray his haunting vision. The dull, plain-spoken man can never make himself properly understood, as he longs and strives to be. We gaze out wistfully through the windows of our isolation, we call and signal to each other across the severing spaces, but we cannot penetrate the barriers of personality to touch the real self who dwells captive there. Each of us must live his truest life in solitude, aloof and apart from his kind. And when we suffer the penalty of loneliness and fall into mutual misunderstanding or estrangement, when even Christians cannot be brought to realize the wrongs which they are inflicting on each other, this also is part of our humiliation.

[1] Canon Newbolt.

¶ In *Little Dorrit* the horror and curse of long confinement arrived when the debtor had grown naturalized and acclimatized in his prison, and felt proud to be called "the father of the Marshalsea." These physical appetites and necessities of ours have, in themselves, nothing common or unclean. They possess no inherent evil. But in their quality and character they are of the earth, earthy. And man's supreme instinct is that which makes him always a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, encamped here, but never properly domesticated, because his heart and his treasure are otherwhere. The romance of literature is filled with pictures of strange humiliation. The banished duke keeping court on the greensward in Arden, the foundling princess bred up under a shepherd's roof in Bohemia, are like parables of the spirit of man in exile, waiting for the times of the restitution of all things when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.[1]

2. The Apostle's ultimate hope was the resurrection body, not a continuance in a condition of disembodiment; his desire was, not to be "unclothed," but to be clothed upon. St. Paul speaks of our body of humiliation as an earthly house, earthly in its origin, earthly in its tendency, earthly in its destiny, but it is the house of a tabernacle. Like that which the Jews had during their years of wandering, it is not a permanent dwelling—it is to be "dissolved." When life, that strange undefined principle which directs our material existence, is withdrawn, the body yields to chemical action and other forces, and those elements which compose our frames return to their native clay. But "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." In the case of every human spirit God will give it a body suitable to its new surroundings. Perfect glory cannot be enjoyed by complex beings such as we are till we have bodies given to us in which perfect happiness can be realized; and the promise of our Lord is fulfilled, "I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

¶ I remember once meeting a student of the Word who told me that one of his greatest ambitions concerning the world to come was to meet Isaiah and have communion with him! I could quite well understand it. The man had been spending weeks and months in the company of that great prophet, until Isaiah had become exalted in the student's mind as a great and com-

[1] T. H. Darlow, *Via Sacra*, 35.

manding hero. But Paul had the same intense desire concerning his Lord, and I think if we turned our thoughts upon the Lord with even a little of the Apostle's intensity we should have the same great and inspiring expectation. They say that Samuel Rutherford used to fall asleep speaking of Christ, and that if during the hours of sleep his unconscious lips muttered anything it was found to be about his Lord. We need to practise ourselves in these things. The more we consort with the Lord, the more we "love His appearing" when He comes to us, as it were, incognito, the more we shall be fired with the consuming expectancy to see Him "as He is."[1]

(1) *The resurrection of the dead is an individual promise.*—It is a hope to us one by one; not like those grand promises which are made to the Church at large, in which we may, each of us, doubtless, have our share, but in which we seem to share only all together. The promise of the resurrection is to each single soul which feels and enjoys its own life, which looks forward with sadness to losing it, to which its own life is the most precious possession in the world. It tells each one of us that this precious life will not be lost; that in due time, to each possessor of it here, it will be restored again, and for ever. We look on one another; we look on each other's faces, on the faces which we have known so long, which we love and delight in; and we know that each must die. We know that we who look at them, who are filled with love and pity and sadness while we look, must die either after them or before them. But as truly as each shall die, so truly shall each be made alive again. So has He said, who is the resurrection and the life. So it must be if He is true.

¶ The longer I live, the more clearly I see how all souls are in His hand—the mean and the great. Fallen on the earth in their baseness, or fading as the mist of morning in their goodness;—still in the hand of the potter as the clay, and in the temple of their master as the cloud. It was not the mere bodily death that He conquered—that death had no sting. It was this spiritual death which He conquered, so that at last it should be swallowed up—mark the word—not in life, but in victory. As the dead body shall be raised to life, so also the defeated soul to victory, if only it has been fighting on its Master's side, has made no covenant with death; nor itself bowed its forehead for his seal. Blind from the prison-house, maimed from the battle, or mad

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Feb. 28, 1907

from the tombs, their souls shall surely yet sit, astonished, at His feet who giveth peace.[1]

Hail, garden of confident hope!
Where sweet seeds are quickening in darkness and cold;
For how sweet and how young will they be
When they pierce thro' the mould.
Balm, myrtle, and heliotrope
There watch and there wait out of sight for their Sun:
While the Sun, which they see not, doth see
Each and all one by one.[2]

(2) *The resurrection is a rising into a higher and more glorious life*, to a life as far beyond this in glory as He Himself exceeds in the glory of His raised body all that is greatest and most beautiful on earth. It is not a mere coming back again to this life. This life has many charms and many delights; and if sin were not here men might well be content with such blessings as God has given us here. But it is not to the blessings and happiness of this life that *that* resurrection is to be. As far as the glory of heaven is greater than that of earth—as far as it is more blessed to be with God, and to know and feel His presence, than to have Him hidden from us behind a veil—so much greater is the blessedness and glory to which they who shall be accounted worthy of that world are to be raised.

¶ I was once spending a few weeks in a small seaside parish in Durham, and while walking on the beach, which was sheltered by high and massive cliffs, I picked up a piece of coal. It was not rough and angular as it came from the mine, but round, and smooth, and polished; still coal, but oh how altered and how changed! I showed it to a friend and inquired into its probable recent history and learned that it must have fallen from some passing ship or perhaps it had dropped into the wide sea when some vessel was being laden or unladen. But whence the change? When apparently lost beneath the waves it had been rolled about in the bosom of the deep, wafted hither and thither by its stormy waters till at last it found a resting-place on the peaceful shore. So it is with the people of God. The temptations and troubles of life are means in God's hand for chipping off the angles and smoothing the rough edges which mar our characters, and thus by

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (*Works*, v. 456).
[2] Christina G. Rossetti, *Songs for Strangers and Pilgrims.*

slow degrees we are fitted to fill our allotted places, and perhaps do our allotted work in the distant land of glory.[1]

3. The model after which we shall be fashioned is Christ's glorious body. The body of our low estate, wearing a temporary fashion, is yet capable of receiving a permanent form which is made visible in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because in Him the universal law that applies to man's life in every portion of it was made manifest, expressed in a Person—as, indeed, all truth that is to be vital, truth that is to be operative, truth that is to inspire, must necessarily be expressed. Examples do not move us; aphorisms do not touch us; we are taught by a Person, we are taught by character, and we are carried on by seeing truth expressed in a form in which it is vital, operative and active. The Lord Jesus Christ is the universal Lord of all that concerns man's body, soul, spirit, life. The Lord Jesus Christ in His own Person covers the whole realm of human nature, penetrates into every part of its sphere. We know that the conception of self, of soul, or spirit, cannot be realized by us apart from the body in which it dwells. The body influences it, expresses it. We know one another only through our outward semblance and appearance. We cannot separate the particular elements of man which constitute him a soul; we cannot find where his spirit lives. Man's human nature is one and indivisible; we cannot arrive at our spiritual self by a process of abstraction; we cannot take from a man so much and say, That is mere material, and therefore behind that material lies something else. We cannot raise man or man's nature above the body and its limitations.

¶ Our nature, as a whole, has been ennobled as well as invigorated by the Son of God. Bending from His throne of Heaven, in the immensity of His love, He has taken it upon Him in its integrity. He has taken body and soul alike, and joined it by an indissoluble union to His own eternal Person. That body which was born of Mary, which lived on this planet for thirty-three years, which was spat upon, which was buffeted, which was scourged, which was crucified, which underwent the stiffness and coldness of death, and was raised again in glory—that body exists somewhere still in space at the right hand of God the Father Almighty (so our poor human language struggles to speak out the

[1] W. G. Rainsford.

tremendous truth), and thereby it confers on all who are partakers in human flesh and blood a patent of nobility of which our race can never be deprived. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Yes, He has ennobled us, and yet, while this life lasts, how great is the interval between our condition and His! How unlike is that body of glory which rose from the tomb on Easter morning to our body—unlike in its indescribable beauty, in its freedom of movement, in its inaccessibility to decay, in its spirituality of texture.[1]

4. The power by which Christ shall subdue all things unto Himself, will be sufficient to change our mortal bodies. If we are in Him He will gather up what death has left; He will transfigure it with the splendour of a new life; He will change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. Sown in corruption, it will be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, it will be raised in glory; sown in the very extreme of physical weakness, it will be raised in a strictly superhuman power; sown a natural body, controlled on every side by physical law, it will be a true body still, but a body that belongs to the sphere of the spirit. Most difficult indeed it is even to the imagination to understand how this poor body, our companion for so many years—rather, indeed, part of our very selves—is to be first wrenched from us at death and then restored to us if we will, transfigured thus by the majestic glory of the Son of God.

¶ There was a time when science rather mocked at the possibility of the resurrection. That is changed now, I think. At least I have heard the utterance of a great biologist who said, "If there is a resurrection, it must be a resurrection of the body. Body and spirit are so intimately connected that the one cannot be conceived as existing for ever in a perfect state without the other."[2]

¶ The Catholic Faith proclaims "the Resurrection of the Body." What does it mean? It means that for every child of man the hour is coming when the body—the frail and crumbling temple of the soul—shall pass from the home of corruption to conditions of an evident and sensible existence, endowed with movement, gifted with life; the form will be the same as in the days of the old life long ago. And if it be asked by what power

[1] H. P. Liddon. [2] Bishop M. Creighton, *The Mind of St. Peter*, 107.

this overwhelming miracle is wrought, the answer is, in apostolic phrase, by "the glory of God." It was Christ who brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel; it was also Christ who clearly taught and evidenced the fact that *the body* shall rise again, whilst He also evidenced the truth in His own Divine Person that in very deed it must die. That death may be sad, may be tragic. It is. The heart sinks and withers beneath the thought that the form so dear to it, so expressive of the light and beautiful soul, should be, must be, the slave of corruption. But this, at least, is a consoling consequence. If *the whole* man has had to pay the penalty of sin, the body in its dissolution, the soul in its disembodiment, Reason herself demands, what Revelation asserts, that *the whole* man should share the victory—the body by a splendid reconstruction, the soul by restoration to its ancient home. God's promise of man's entire beatitude is a pledge that this article of the Christian creed is true. The Church does not trouble herself with any details about particles of matter, about its mysterious onward march in bodies she has nothing to say; but she *does* assert continuous identity, and she has on her side two important teachers: (1) the affections and yearnings of the human heart, and (2) which is more to the point—Divine Revelation.

(1) There is an infinity about pure human affection which points to another life. Here we have time enough given us just to have great hopes and strong loves, and then what seemed so stable has vanished like a morning dream. They vanish—they do not end. The practical instincts of pure affection and noble aspiration point imperiously to a better world. As well say that the evidence of the affections goes for nothing as that the robin's song does not speak of autumn, or the coming swallow of the spring; as well say your strong desire for happiness with those you love, your deep longing for continued converse with souls blessed and beautiful, but gone, goes for nothing, as that discord in resolution does not delight you because it teaches of the coming mystery of harmonious union, or that the first faint shafts of the eastern colour do not herald the morning dawn.

(2) Better still, Revelation. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." And best of all, *the* Revelation—the quiet form of Good Friday night, the Risen Jesus on Easter Day! As certainly as sleep implies awaking, so—since Jesus was buried and rose again—the grave means resurrection from the dead, means, in fact, that here we work and there we wait, wait for the great awaking.[1]

[1] Canon W. J. Knox Little.

Dreary were this earth, if earth were all,
Though brighten'd oft by dear affection's kiss;—
Who for the spangles wears the funeral pall?
But catch a gleam beyond it, and 'tis bliss.

Heavy and dull this frame of limbs and heart,
Whether slow creeping on cold earth, or borne
On lofty steed, or loftier prow, we dart
O'er wave or field; yet breezes laugh to scorn

Our puny speed, and birds, and clouds in heaven,
And fish, like living shafts that pierce the main,
And stars that shoot through freezing air at even—
Who but would follow, might he break his chain?

And thou shalt break it soon; the grovelling worm
Shall find his wings, and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord with lightning form
And snowy vest—such grace He won for thee,

When from the grave He sprung at dawn of morn,
And led through boundless air thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints new-born
Might fearless follow to their blest abode.

But first, by many a stern and fiery blast
The world's rude furnace must the blood refine,
And many a gale of keenest woe be pass'd,
Till every pulse beat true to airs divine.

Till every limb obey the mounting soul,
The mounting soul, the call by Jesus given.
He who the stormy heart can so control
The laggard body soon will waft to heaven.[1]

[1] J. Keble, *The Christian Year.*

Christian Joy.

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Christian Joy.

Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice.—Phil. iv. 4.

1. It has been well said that this whole Epistle may be summed up in two short sentences: "I rejoice"; "Rejoice ye!" The word and the thing crop up in every chapter, like some hidden brook, ever and anon sparkling out into the sunshine from beneath the shadows. This continual refrain of gladness is all the more remarkable if we remember the Apostle's circumstances. The letter shows him to us as a prisoner, dependent on Christian charity for a living, having no man like-minded to cheer his solitude; uncertain as to how it shall be with him, and obliged to contemplate the possibility of being offered, or poured out as a libation, on the sacrifice and service of his faith. Yet out of all the darkness his clear notes ring jubilant; and this sunny Epistle comes from the pen of a prisoner who did not know but that to-morrow he might be a martyr.

2. This is not the enervating speech of the lotus-land; it is a bracing exhortation ringing through the stifling air of difficulty and strife. Age is not frequently associated with such sunny exuberance of spirit. Its song is apt to "crack," its lights burn dim, its disposition becomes despondent. Age is so prone to become reminiscent, and memory is a fertile breeding-ground of dark and tearful regrets. Age fondly dwells on "radiant morns" which have "passed away"; it turns its eyes away from the east whence new mornings break. And so the psalm changes into a threnody, and minor tunes pervade the evening hymn. But here is an old man in whose vespers the minor note finds no place. Hard circumstances have not made him hard. Apparent failure has not soured him into a cynic. He retains his fine, appreciative sense of life's essential sweetness. He has not

become moodily reminiscent of past glories and of vanished feasts. He feels the days before him. The pains of to-day are only the birth-pangs of a better to-morrow. The immediate difficulty is only a prickly burr which contains most toothsome fruit. Rome may separate the Apostle from his fellows, she is powerless to separate him from his Lord. Imprisonment still provides a room for two, and by no earthly conspiracy can he be bereft of his great Companion. The Lord is with him, and so the prison is ablaze with light. Old age glows with sunny optimism. The psalm of adoration rises night and day. And the captive sends forth to his fellow-believers the invigorating counsel, "Rejoice in the Lord alway."

3. This is the Apostle's farewell. When a Roman wished to say "Good-bye," he said, "Be well," "Be strong." When a Greek would say it, he said, "Be happy." And it is in this simplest sense first that St. Paul says "Rejoice." It is one, nearly the last, of the farewells which he essays again and again in this Epistle to his beloved Philippian Church. But just as we might dwell on our own formula of leave-taking, delighting to feel that in saying "Good-bye" we were saying the best and truest of prayers for those from whom we parted—if indeed it means "God be with you!"—so St. Paul dwells on the formula and puts its full meaning into it, "Be happy"; yes, not only in the formal, idiomatic, complimentary sense, but in very truth. "Be happy, be happy always in the Lord." It is a wish, but it is more than a wish; it is an exhortation.

¶ Bishop Hacket chose as his motto, "Serve God, and be cheerful." Golden words these. I do not know how it may be with you; but the remembrance of these words has often lifted me up from the pit, and dissipated the cloud of gloom. Yes, learn to connect with the direct service of God this obligation of cheerfulness—cheerfulness having its springs in Christian joy, cheerfulness flushing and refreshing the heart, cheerfulness overflowing in deeds and thoughts of kindliness towards others, and of thankfulness towards God.[1]

¶ The worst thing Carlyle did was his incessant barking at mankind, and it was an ill legacy to leave to us. It damaged all the rest of his work, made it less effective than it would otherwise have been. It pressed despair into the heart of man, and though

[1] J. B. Lightfoot, *Ordination Addresses*, 314.

he pressed duty also into our hearts, the sense of duty he impressed was weakened by the sense of despair he encouraged. Had his statement been true, I should not complain. Let us have the truth by all means, however unpleasant it may seem. But his abuse was not true. Men are not "mostly fools." All work is not ill done. Cheating does not cover all business, nor gabble all speech, nor is the great river of things running in darkness. Whoever would get the good out of Carlyle, let him put apart all this side of him as one of the untrue things he himself denounced so heartily. The voice of the true Prophet speaks better things. He believes in God and therefore he believes in Man, God's child. And his face should be bright, his voice clear, his eyes with a light of victory, in his right hand the sword and in his left the trumpet. The spirit of St. Paul should be in his heart, and the praise of St. Paul on his lips.[1]

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn?"

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!"[2]

[1] Stopford A. Brooke, *The Kingship of Love*, 117. [2] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

I.

The Source of Christian Joy.

1. *The secret spring of Christian joy is union with Christ.*— When we surrender self and lose ourselves in Christ, the fountains of joy are at once opened. Having yielded his heart utterly to Christ, man is at one with himself, and in this harmony begins a joy which this world can neither give nor take away.

To be "in Christ," which is commended to us here as the basis of all true blessedness, means that the whole of our nature shall be occupied with, and fastened upon, Him; thought turning to Him, the tendrils of the heart clinging and creeping around Him, the will submitting itself in glad obedience to His beloved and supreme commandments, the aspirations, and desires feeling out after Him as the sufficient and eternal good, and all the current of our being setting towards Him in earnestness of desire, and resting in Him in tranquillity of possession. And, says St. Paul in the great words of the text, such a union, reciprocal and close, is the secret of all blessedness. If thus we are wedded to that Lord, and His life is in us and ours enclosed in Him, then there is such correspondence between our necessities and our supplies that there is no room for aching emptiness; no gnawing of unsatisfied longings, but the blessedness that comes from having found that which we seek, and in the finding being stimulated to a still closer, happier, and not restless search after fuller possession. The man that knows where to get anything and everything that he needs, and to whom desires are but the prophets of instantaneous fruition — surely that man has in his possession the talismanic secret of perpetual gladness. They who thus dwell in Christ by faith, love, obedience, imitation, aspiration, and enjoyment are like men housed in some strong fortress, who can look out over all the fields alive with enemies, and feel that they are safe. They who thus dwell in Christ gain command over themselves; and because they can bridle passions, and subdue hot and impossible desires, and keep themselves well in hand, have stanched one chief source of unrest and sadness, and have opened one pure and sparkling fountain of unfailing gladness.

¶ What holy whispers would pass to and fro between the Father and us if, at every heart's beat and at every pulse of breath, we could repeat our untiring hallelujah with them on high, who, again and again, at each pause, at each close of God's unceasing display are ever saying, again and yet again, "Hallelujah." Here is the secret of Christian cheerfulness; and no power on earth can break it down when once we have discovered that there is absolutely nothing but sin itself which is not fitted to renew and to replenish the delight of giving thanks. Why, then, are any Christian faces clouded and thick? Why are there any Christian hearts that are sullen and tired? Call upon your spirits to give thanks unto the Lord God. That door of escape is ever open, that gateway into gladness can never be shut; and, day after day, you can magnify the Lord, and worship His Name, ever world without end. "Lift up your hearts unto the Lord," for indeed "it is meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks" to God for His great glory.[1]

¶ It is interesting to note that the earliest representations of the face of Christ in art picture Him in the bloom of youth, suggestive of the eternal youth of the Word. Such representations are ideal in their nature, and are founded on classic forms, and they express the joyfulness of primitive Christianity as well as its radiant belief in the risen Christ. It was not until the fourth century that the representations of the Saviour became clouded over: sorrow, austerity, anguish taking the place of youthfulness and beauty, and Christ becoming the grief-stricken sufferer.[2]

(1) When we are divided between many conflicting interests, halting between two opinions, trying to serve two masters, distracted by the cares of many things, which enter in and choke the word, we cannot be really joyful. But when the whole current of our being sets in towards God, wiping out the minor ruffles and cross-currents of the stream; when we have no motive save to please our master Christ and do His will; when we are the gilded temples for His indwelling, the channels for His outworking, then our peace begins to flow as a river, and having peace with God, we rejoice in hope of His glory, and rejoice in tribulations also, and rejoice in God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Canon H. Scott Holland, *Helps to Faith and Practice*, 121.

[2] J. Burns, *Illustrations from Art* (1912), 24.

¶ When Haydn was once asked how it was that his church music was always so cheerful, the great composer made a most appropriate and beautiful reply: "I cannot," said he, "make it otherwise; I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."[1]

¶ Be very sure that it is right and good to appear cheerful as long as ever you can, and that it has nothing hypocritical in it. To aim at appearing cheerful would be wrong; not so to aim at being cheerful. And the only way to aim at being cheerful is to try to cheer others, to see the bright side, and to show one's best. Just as we try to become good by doing painfully what we might perhaps do so easily if we were already good. And God does not leave us alone, so doing. Joy comes by giving joy, often when things look most unpromising for ourselves.[2]

¶ Let us never believe for a moment that God looks askance at human happiness. It is true that He has sanctified sorrow as a discipline and a preparation; but only that it may be "turned into joy." "Sorrow may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." The blessed Lord did not hesitate to take His part in the wedding feast. He noted with disapproval those who imagined that to be religious was to be "of a sad countenance." His eye was attracted to the children playing in the market-place. Man of sorrows as He was, He "rejoiced in spirit," and promised to His followers that they should be partakers of His joy. We are made for gladness, and shall not be able to fulfil our destiny until we know how to be glad.[3]

(2) Men find their truest joy not in the things they ask for, but in the things they surrender. The truly happy life at all its points of contact with the world does not ask for anything, it gives something. Happiness is founded, as far as all earth-relations are concerned, not on what the world can do for us, but on what we become able to do for it. Happy are they who can take to their fellows the treasures of mercy and peace. Happy are they who can add something to the common stock of the world's tenderness and quietness.

[1] W. J. Armitage, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, 22.
[2] *Life of William Edward Collins, Bishop of Gibraltar*, 51.
[3] A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 188.

¶ The secret of happiness is not found in selfishly seeking for it, as an end in life, any more than Prince de Leon found the fountain of perpetual youth by seeking it among the flowers of Florida. The Golden Rule of life will bring the golden reign of joy and happiness into the heart. Paul and Silas have more joy in the dungeon than those who confined them there. Jeremy Taylor, while in the hands of thieves, had welling up in his heart a joy that surmounted all adverse conditions. Says he, "They have left me the sun and moon; fire and water; a loving wife and many friends to pity me and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse, and they have not taken away my merry countenance and my cheerful spirit and the good conscience; and he that hath so many causes of joy and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down on his little handful of thorns." Looking out upon the beauties of nature, recognizing the necessities of life that were supplied him, the love of wife and friends, the privilege of discourse, he was happy in the thought that his merry countenance could not be taken away, for without were still so many pleasantries and within a cheerful spirit and a good conscience. He found the secret of happiness in the peculiar sense of victory over the untoward conditions of life. To how many has this thought given courage and renewed length of happy days![1]

¶ Joy is a most contagious, catching thing. But of all joys, joy in the midst of trouble. Nothing more wins men to the Gospel of Christ than the witness of a bright life; and that witness we have all of us within our power to bear. Nothing persuades the world of the reality of religion more than the deep rest it brings to the believing heart. A mind at perfect peace—that is the mystery of Christian living, that is the secret of communion with God. But this strange, inward power is most clearly perceived in the midst of distress. Men cannot fathom it; human nature cannot furnish it. It is no worldly stoicism crushing down the natural impulses of the heart. It is a Divine thing to "glory in tribulations"; to feel the power of Christ resting upon you, raising you above yourself, turning your very weakness to strength.[2]

2. *This joy is fed by belief in the steadfast love of Christ.*—Man's soul is not only discordant but vacant. It cries out for emotion. The fulness of emotion is its life. Now that vacancy is the death of joy, and it sends men on that perpetual chase after happiness,

[1] C. F. Ireland. [2] R. W. Barbour, *Thoughts*, 49.

which we see so much of in the world. Hence the life-cry of most men is, "Give, give"; for the human soul, unsatisfied with the world, unsatisfied had it possession of the starry universe, yearns for that fulness of emotion which is given only by the love of God. Hence it is that you so often find the young heart, while yet undegraded in its first fresh feelings, willing and even wishing to die in its youth. For what means that sentimentalism which so many young souls feel—viz., that to die young is youth's divinest gift—but this, that they are becoming conscious of that hollowness and vacancy in the heart which no mere human emotion can fill? Or to see this in its crisis, look at the unbeliever. The man who has lost his early faith in Christianity will often tell you in unutterable sadness, "I have looked upwards, and backwards, and beyond, and I find nothing in life but the shadow of that vanity and vexation which fill my own soul." For there is no sorrow so intense as that which enters a man when he is tempted to believe that there is no Christ. The hollowness of the heart is awfully realized *then*. But belief in the love of Christ gives this fulness of emotion. It is the perception of that love in all its grandeur, caring for us in every personal sorrow, sympathizing with us in every individual experience, that fills the heart's vacancy, and at once creates joy.

¶ There is one thing which Christ's followers can do, and that is to keep themselves in the delightful atmosphere of His love. It is our fault and our shame if we spend so many days in the chilling fogs or under the heavy clouds of unbelief, or in the contaminating atmosphere of conformity to the world. "Is it *always* foggy here on the banks of Newfoundland?" inquired a passenger of an old Cunard captain. "How should I know, madam? I don't *live* here."[1]

¶ Joy. What is joy? Love awake and alive, fully conscious of herself. If love be the heart's first beat, joy is its counter-beat. If love be the outflow of the heart, joy is the inflow, the flowing back of the loving heart. The rise of temperature which love brings, the heightened being, the effervescence—that is joy.[2]

'Twixt gleams of joy and clouds of doubt
Our feelings come and go;
Our best estate is tossed about
In ceaseless ebb and flow.

[1] T. L. Cuyler. [2] R. W. Barbour, *Thoughts*, 2.

No mood of feeling, form of thought,
  Is constant for a day;
But Thou, O Lord, Thou changest not:
  The same Thou art alway.

I grasp Thy strength, make it mine own,
  My heart with peace is blest;
I lose my hold, and then come down
  Darkness and cold unrest.

Let me no more my comfort draw
  From my frail hold of Thee;
In this alone rejoice with awe,
  Thy mighty grasp of me.

Out of that weak, unquiet drift
  That comes but to depart,
To that pure Heaven my spirit lift
  Where Thou unchanging art.

Lay hold of me with Thy strong grasp,
  Let Thine Almighty arm
In its embrace my weakness clasp,
  And I shall fear no harm.

The purpose of eternal good
  Let me but surely know;
On this I'll lean, let changing mood
  And feeling come or go;

Glad when Thy sunshine fills my soul;
  Not lorn when clouds o'ercast;
Since Thou within the sure control
  Of love dost hold me fast.[1]

3. *This joy is independent of circumstances.*—Real joy must be independent of outward changes. The longing to attain a state of life superior to the accidents of time and change shows this. The wisest men have spoken of following the right in the face of all consequences as the source of the highest and purest joy of man. The fellowship of Christ's joy gives this. It is a joy undisturbed by sorrow; it may seem to be weakened, but it is in

[1] J. C. Shairp.

reality strengthened, by suffering. So those men found it to whom Christ said that their joy should be full. They never fully understood what He meant until they suffered. Peter came to feel it, not when looking into the silent depths of the Sea of Galilee in the calm evening, and remembering Him who once walked there, but when made a "partaker of the sufferings of Christ." It was not when rising to some lofty region of thought, wherein his "fiery pulse beat fast" with the contemplation of the Everlasting, that Paul felt this deep blessedness, but when cast down, forsaken, always bearing about in his body the sufferings of Christ, and while glorying in infirmity, that he knew the "peace which passeth understanding." So with the followers of the Saviour now. Changes, disappointments, battles, sufferings, only deepen the joy which springs from the utter surrender of self, and which finds its expression in the cry, "Thy will, O Father, be done." And even death itself, which damps out the joy of all other men, consummates the blessedness of those who, through fellowship of life, are partakers of the joy of Christ.

¶ Stevenson prescribed cheerfulness for books as well as for people: "As I live I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. The Bible, in most parts, is a cheerful book; it is our little piping theologies, tracts, and sermons that are dull and dowie." And all this was not the easy outflow of health and animal spirits, bidding other people be gay because the mantle of gaiety clung without effort to his own shoulders. It was the sturdy creed of a harassed, suffering invalid, with death constantly at his elbow; a body hampered and restricted, denied what it most coveted, kept in a subjection that at moments bent the spirit but never broke it. No one ever had more obstacles between him and his ideal, or brought a more unfaltering courage to surmount them, or could say with a greater sincerity, "sick or well, I have had a splendid life of it, grudge nothing, regret very little."[1]

¶ Paul "rejoiced in his bonds" in Christ Jesus, because, being chained to a soldier, he was enabled to speak the gospel message to that soldier; and, having a new guard chained to him every day, he was enabled in the course of due time to speak in turn to the whole of the Praetorian Guard. What a blessed triumph it is, when a man rejoices in fetters, thanks God for his bonds! The

[1] J. A. Hammerton, *Stevensoniana*, 223.

very clanking of the chains of the Apostle Paul had a voice for his Master! When Dober, the Moravian missionary, first went down to St. Thomas to labour for the blacks, and was told that he could never get a chance to reach and teach the slaves there because he was not a slave himself, he said, "We will sell ourselves into slavery and work by their side." Dober rejoiced in bonds for Christ Jesus if those fetters could be the means of telling the gospel story. Paul and Silas rejoiced in the stocks if the stocks could be the means of a wider preaching of the gospel; and Paul writes that his own imprisonment, and his own boldness in preaching Christ notwithstanding his imprisonment, became the means of inspiring courage and confidence in more timid souls, so that many other brethren were waxing bold and confident to speak the Word of God in the face of opposition.[1]

¶ I do not believe there lives on God's earth a man who has lived through more sorrow, shame, toil, danger, drags and insult than I have. This I know, whatever tries other men, everything that had deadly power to try me came. For fifteen years, from thirty-three to forty-eight or fifty, I never knew real health, and had to work on in pain and weakness day by day. For thirty years the only thing I ever really longed for was *bed*. It sounds mean, I dare say it is mean, but it is true, and I wish to tell you the truth; whatever joy or sorrow came, the overwhelming sense of weariness and endless pain made bed, forgetfulness, the only human solace that satisfied. It is only in the last three years that I have begun to joy again in my waking life. Yet, strange contradiction to all this, I count myself blessed to have been allowed to live such a life. I felt the warrior joy of life and the conqueror's joy of getting the mastery. In my worst agony I could not pray to have it taken away, so utterly, by degrees, did I feel the power and light that came. And now all creation has opened out to me by living, and everything that I count happy I know to have come out of the self-mastery and training and truth which those years of anguish brought. My positive creed is an absolute unfaltering certainty of life triumphant.[2]

¶ Joy and blithe serenity which received death with no alarm or self-abasement were the marked characteristics of the early Christians. St. Luke throws a flood of light on the tone of their society—"drunken, but not with wine"; intoxicated, so to speak, with the rushing influences of Pentecost—when he says that "they did take their food with exultation and singleness of heart."

[1] A. T. Pierson, *The Heights of the Gospel*, 204.
[2] Edward Thring, Head Master of Uppingham.

The words indicate their bounding gladness, their simplicity and smoothness of feeling, as of a plain without stones, or a field without furrows.[1]

Speak to me, heart of mine, old and weary of years,
Labour and loss have been thine, pains and terrors and tears;
Why art thou now so light, making my tired feet
Forget the steps of their pilgrimage and spring as if life were sweet?

Why? Because life *is* sweet. Thy secret I know, I know,
By the stream in the beautiful street the trees of gladness grow,
And under their fruitful boughs I see one Angel stand,
So close, so close, that I sometimes think he lays a hand in my hand.

Red Love still rules the day, white Faith enfolds the night,
And Hope, green-mantled, leads the way by the walls of the City of Light.
Therefore I walk as one who sees the joy shine through
Of the Other Life behind our life, like the stars behind the blue.

II.

The Continuity of Christian Joy.

It is one of the most important features in Christian joy, that it is not of man, and that it cannot be undone. Sometimes it may be brighter and more glowing than at other times, and by contrast we will occasionally feel that there is very little of it stirring our hearts and beautifying our lives; yet we are distinctly taught that, however faint and weak the gift that is in us may appear, if we only "stir it up," as the Apostle directs, we shall again go on our way rejoicing. Let us remember, then, that this spiritual joy continues for ever in the heart of him who has given himself to God, as it is God's gift and in its nature eternal. If it be ours, no one can deprive us of it, for He has attached His promise to it—"Your joy no man taketh from you."

¶ We sometimes speak as if the joy peculiar to childhood were but a dream, as though the best thing a man can do is to

[1] Dean Farrar.

associate with children in order to catch by reflection a fleeting ray of the sunshine which once rested on his own childhood. We sometimes speak as if the young man's joy, the sense of life, of boundless hope, of a widening horizon, must die out of heart and soul as a mere illusion. We speak as if the mature man's joy, the relish for work, the rejoicing activity can last only a certain time, that the joy of our work must cease with the newness of it. But do you not know that it is Christ's function to keep open the springs of life within us with the special joys which belong to each period of it? To be children always with the hearts of children, that is the privilege He bestows on those to whom He gives a place in the household of God. We cannot be children when we pass from the care and home of our earthly father. But we never pass from the care and home of our Heavenly Father. We need not cease to be gay, to be free from care. Nay, we should not cease to be so. To look hopefully forward, to lean trustfully back, that is the attitude of children. Children do not question. No, I am wrong; they do question, but it is things they question. They never question love. They never question the power and wisdom of a parent. Their gladsomeness would go at once, the sunshine of their life would pass into shadow at once if they did. If we could renew our childhood we should be glad, and the command to rejoice always is simply a command to renew our childhood. God wants us to remove the stones and earth from this clearest, brightest spring of water, that it may bubble up afresh. To receive the Kingdom of Heaven as little children; to walk and live in the Kingdom of Heaven as little children; that is the secret of perpetual joy.[1]

¶ Napoleon, when sent to Elba, adopted, in proud defiance of his fate, the motto, "*Ubicunque felix.*" It was not true in his case; but the Christian may be truly "happy everywhere" and always.[2]

III.

The Duty of Rejoicing.

The joy of the Lord is a duty. It is so because it is the natural effect of faith, because we can do much to regulate our emotions directly, and much more to determine them by determining what set of thoughts shall engage us. A wise and strong

[1] J. F. Ewing, *Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, 120.

[2] C. H. Spurgeon.

faith is our duty. To keep our emotional nature well under control of reason and will is our duty. To lose thoughts of ourselves in God's truth about Himself is our duty. If we do these things, we cannot fail to have Christ's joy remaining in us, and making ours full. This is a truth which we have great need to lay to heart. It is of no great consequence that we should practically confute the impotent old sneer about religion as being a gloomy thing. One does not need to mind much what some people say on that matter. The world would call "the joy of the Lord" gloom, just as much as it calls "godly sorrow" gloom. But we are losing for ourselves a power and an energy of which we have no conception, unless we feel that joy is a duty, and that not to be joyful is more than a misfortune, it is a fault.

There is always a sunny side to the house of our life—a chamber where brightness is, and the door of this chamber is never locked against us, though it sometimes requires some art and patience to open the door. And it is because joy is a possibility that it becomes more than a possibility, viz., a duty. We do our best work when we are joyous; we ought to be joyous that we may do our best work. And when we are inclined on our own account to be grave and gloomy, let us strive to be joyous on Christ's account, and on account of others. We cannot dispel the world's shadows unless there is some sunshine in our own hearts. We cannot heal and cheer and strengthen the men and women around us unless there is some joy in our face and soul.

¶ It had been well for Ruskin's health if he could have husbanded all his gradually recovered strength for the studies which brought him peace of mind. His friends, as he says in "Fors," often counselled him to avoid controversial and painful subjects. Cardinal Manning, for one, had written to him: "Joy is one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost. There is before you and about you a world of beauty, sweetness, stillness, peace, and light. You have only to open your whole soul to it." But his eager spirit made such peaceful preoccupation and such economy of power impossible to him.[1]

> "Joy is a duty"—so with golden lore
> The Hebrew Rabbis taught in days of yore.
> And happy human hearts heard in their speech
> Almost the highest wisdom man can reach.

[1] E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 435.

But one bright peak still rises far above,
And there the Master stands whose name is Love,
Saying to those whom heavy tasks employ,
"Life is divine when duty is a joy."[1]

1. *Joy is strength.*—All gladness has something to do with efficiency; for it is the prerogative of man that his force comes from his mind, and not from his body. The old song about a sad heart tiring in a mile is as true in regard to the gospel, and the works of Christian people, as in any other case. If we have hearts full of light, and souls at rest in Christ, and the rest and blessedness of a tranquil gladness lying there and filling our being, work will be easy, endurance will be easy, sorrow will be bearable, and trials will not be so very hard.

Just as joy in ourselves for the time being softens, elevates and purifies, so the influence we exercise on others while we are joyous is more or less strong in helping them to be good instead of evil, soft and kind instead of harsh and cruel. The cheerful master makes gentle, willing and happy servants. The cheerful mate makes work pleasant and keeps off strife. The cheerful husband lightens the burdens of his wife's cares, and thus soothes her temper. The cheerful father makes it easier for his children to obey him, helps them over their moments of ill-temper and discontent, and by joy alone dispels many a gathering storm of anger and strife. The cheerful teacher keeps better order in his class than a surly one, and the cheerful boy is ever so much more teachable and tractable than a sulky one. A morbid, melancholy and discontented person makes it tenfold more difficult to discharge our duties towards him. To say nothing of the elements of domestic discord which are involved in depression of spirits, it leads imperceptibly to estrangement and consequent neglect.

¶ Anyone can rejoice "when there's nothing whatever to grumble at"—though some people often fail to do so, even then—but, as Mark Tapley would say, there's "some credit in being jolly" when everything goes wrong. What a pleasure it is to see anyone with a beaming smile, even though we know that the face wearing it often looks gloomy or cross! But, when the joyous look may be depended on, the effect is magical. Happy people are like sunshine, cheering up everybody around them. When

[1] H. van Dyke.

we meet one of these glad souls, we find our smiles rising to match theirs, and we go on our way feeling cheered and helped.... We have no right to add to the sorrows of the world by being gloomy or discontented. We all create a certain soul-atmosphere. Let us see to it that the atmosphere we are creating every day may help others to thank God and take courage. We can all walk in the glad consciousness of sins forgiven and in the radiance of God's wonderful Love. Though it is true enough that anyone may, by determined effort, acquire the valuable habit of cheerfulness, I think those who are glad at heart—like a merry child—without special effort, help and cheer their comrades far more. Happiness is very infectious. I used to keep a photograph of a laughing baby on the mantelpiece, because I could not help smiling when I looked at it—and it is impossible to smile, all to one's self, and cherish melancholy thoughts at the same time. Light must always banish darkness when they are brought together.[1]

¶ During the South African war, we were told of the scion of a noble house, who had escaped from captivity at Pretoria, being able to live for four days on some sticks of chocolate, because he had begun to taste the inexpressible joy of liberty. What cannot men do when their hearts are glad and free? Joy gives wings to the feet, sinews to the legs, muscles to the arms, elasticity to every motion.[2]

2. *Joy garrisons the soul against temptations.*—The evil one is foiled by song as much as by prayer, and perhaps more. As the microbes of disease cannot exist in the sunlight, neither can temptation succeed against a joyous, singing heart. Song is an antiseptic environment—a bank of sunbeams—which is utterly impregnable to all the assaults of the adversary.

¶ The first thing that led me to seek the secret of God was the exuberant joy which I discerned beaming forth from the noble nature of a young man who had recently yielded himself entirely to God. What he said was probably not remarkable. At least, it has long ago faded from my mind. But I said to myself, "Here is one who is happy in his religious life—not condemned for the past, not conscious of a cloud between himself and God, not dreading the future. His religion is a light on his inner heart, and the glow of it is on his face." To see it was to hunger for it, and to desire it was to obtain. Yes, there is a

[1] Dora Farncomb, *The Vision of His Face*, 156.
[2] F. B. Meyer, *The Soul's Pure Intention*, 83.

spring that rises in the soul, and flows over in musical ripples on the face and in the speech, which is infinitely attractive to those who have just religion enough to make them miserable. If only we were happy in our religious life, with the sparkle, the light, the song that Christ gives, many would come around to ask for our secret, whose joy has been like the brief crackling of thorns under a pot.[1]

¶ We should be as happy as possible, and our happiness should last as long as possible; for those who can finally issue from self by the portal of happiness know infinitely wider freedom than those who pass through the gate of sadness. The joy of the Lord, the joy that is strength, the joy that no man taketh from us, the joy wherewith we joy before God, the abundant joy of faith and hope, and love and praise, this it is that gathers like a radiant, fostering, cheering air around the soul that yields itself to the grace of God, to do His holy, loving will.[2]

Am I wrong to be always so happy? This world is full of grief;
Yet there is laughter of sunshine, to see the crisp green on the leaf,
Daylight is ringing with song-birds, and brooklets are crooning by night;
And why should I make a shadow where God makes all so bright?
Earth may be wicked and weary, yet cannot I help being glad!
There is sunshine without and within me, and how should I mope or be sad?
God would not flood me with blessings, meaning me only to pine
Amid all the bounties and beauties He pours upon me and mine;
Therefore will I be grateful, and therefore will I rejoice;
My heart is singing within me; sing on, O heart and voice.[3]

[1] F. B. Meyer, *The Soul's Pure Intention*, 84.
[2] Bishop Francis Paget.
[3] Walter C. Smith, *Hilda Among the Broken Gods*.

The Antidote to Anxiety.

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The Antidote to Anxiety.

In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.—Phil. iv. 6.

1. Who was he who here said to the Church at Philippi, "In nothing be anxious"? A prisoner in a Roman prison; and when Rome fixed its claws it did not usually let go without drawing blood. He was expecting his trial, which would probably end in death. Everything in the future was absolutely dark and uncertain. It was this man, with all the pressure of personal sorrows weighing upon him, who, in the very crisis of his life, turned to his brethren in Philippi, who had far fewer causes of anxiety than he had, and cheerfully bade them, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Had not that bird learned to sing when his cage was darkened?

¶ We are like men that live in a narrow alley in some city, with great buildings on either side towering high about their heads, and only a strip of sky visible. If we see up in that strip a cloud, we complain and behave as if the whole heavens, right away round the three hundred and sixty degrees of the horizon, were black with tempest. But we see only a strip, and there is a great deal of blue in the sky; however, there may be a cloud in the patch that we see above our heads from the alley where we live. Everything, rightly understood, that God sends to men is a cause of thanksgiving; therefore, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."[1]

2. This is a double precept or exhortation—it forbids us to indulge in a certain habit which is evil and pernicious, and then it enjoins upon us a certain other habit, which is not only good in itself, but is also the effectual cure of the former evil one.

[1] A. Maclaren, *Leaves from the Tree of Life*, 284.

I.

A Prohibition.

"In nothing be anxious."

"In nothing be anxious." How exacting is the ideal! Harassing care is to play no part in the believer's life. Worry is an alloy which always debases the fine metal of the Christian character. It mars and spoils it. And so the counsel is unconditional, and covers every period and sphere in human life. Anxiety is to be banished from everything. It is not to be permitted the smallest foothold in the Kingdom of our Lord.

The root idea of the Greek word which is here translated "anxious" is a divided mind. The mind is looking two ways, is vibrating between two attractions; and it has found no place as yet where it can settle down and be at rest. Hence the sense of weariness caused by anxiety. The root idea of the English word "anxious," like that of "anger," is choking. It is obstruction, distress, pain, carried over from the bodily conception of it into the sphere of the mind. Under the pressure of this anxiety one becomes apprehensive, solicitous, confused; and every cloud becomes a darker cloud, and every weight becomes a heavier weight, and every outlook more ominous and dreadful. To yield to anxiety is to turn evil conjurer and play all kinds of alarming tricks on one's own heart. It is to be a prophet of night rather than sunshine, of tears rather than songs.

The text does not mean that we are not to be industrious and economical and prudent and forethoughtful. Rational exertion to gain suitable ends is not denied to one, but urged and encouraged. The man who quotes, "In nothing be anxious," in justification of laziness, or a supine folding of the hands in presence of services to be rendered and duties to be done, must not forget that the author of these words is likewise author of the words "diligent in business." Neither the indifference of the fatalist nor that of the sensualist has any warrant in the Word of God. "If any will not work neither let him eat." But the thing which is condemned, and which ought to be condemned, and from which the great Apostle and our Lord before him sought to deliver us, is the

over-solicitude which burdens and benumbs the heart, and saps energy from brain and hand, and makes men forget that God is over them, and will provide for all the exigencies of their lives.

¶ The word "careful," used in the Authorized Version, "Be careful for nothing," has somewhat changed its meaning since that translation was made over three hundred years ago. We use the word to describe that wise prudence and thoughtfulness which is the plain duty of man, a being possessed of a reasonable soul "looking before and after." But originally "careful" had a different meaning. It meant to be burdened and fretted with care. It had much the same meaning as we express now by the word "careworn." [1]

1. *The prevalence of anxiety.*—There can be little doubt that we belong to an anxious and careworn generation. Never was the world so rich in material things, never did it possess so many mechanical appliances for lightening human tasks and toils. But as the world grows richer, it seems to grow more and more anxious. And while steam and electricity, and all that extraordinary development of machinery and locomotion and means of communication to which they have led, have multiplied our powers enormously, they seem also to have multiplied our cares. They increase the speed at which we have to move, the high pressure at which we have to live, the dangerous complexity of the social organism of which we form a part. It reminds one of the old tale of Frankenstein's monster. Doctor Frankenstein, through his wonderful knowledge of chemistry and biology, was able to put together the figure of a monstrous man, and to galvanize it into life. And then this dreadful creature of which he was the author became the haunting terror of his own life, almost driving him mad by its tyranny, and at last tragically cutting short his days. And sometimes it almost appears as if the tremendous powers of nature which man has summoned to his aid, and infused into the great fabric of modern civilization which he has gradually built up, were threatening to become our masters and our tyrants, instead of our willing servants. Certain it is that life is not so plain and simple as it used to be. The burdens of existence and duty seem to grow heavier and heavier; and at the same time the men and women of to-day seem to be getting more nervous and

[1] J. C. Lambert, *The Omnipotent Cross*, 142.

highly strung than those of other generations, and less able to bear their burdens calmly and silently and patiently. Thus, on every hand, we are told that nervousness and worry are amongst the chief banes of modern life; and that it is worry, and not work, that wears out so many people before their time.

¶ The things that never happen are often as much realities to us in their effects as those that are accomplished.[1]

The heart which boldly faces death
Upon the battle-field, and dares
Cannon and bayonet, faints beneath
The needle-points of frets and cares.
The stoutest spirits they dismay—
The tiny stings of every day.

And even saints of holy fame,
Whose souls by faith have overcome,
Who wore amid the cruel flame
The molten crown of martyrdom,
Bore not without complaint alway
The petty pains of every day.

Ah! more than martyr's aureole,
And more than hero's heart of fire,
We need the humble strength of soul
Which daily toils and ills require.
Sweet Patience, grant us, if you may,
An added grace for every day.

2. *The folly of anxiety.*—It accomplishes nothing and it weakens us and wears us out.

(1) *It accomplishes nothing.*—There would be some justification for anxiety were there any good in it, but there is not. Nothing is accomplished by it. The train does not arrive a single minute earlier because one goes to the station an hour before it is due; and the long waiting is only tenfold longer and more dreary if we fancy that our expected friend is surely sick or that some accident has occurred. If there is an encouraging word to be spoken, or a helpful deed to be done, let us speak or do; but to sit still, and paint pictures of disaster, and forecast ruin to friends and enterprises, does not help forward anything.

[1] Charles Dickens.

I have learned, as days have passed me,
Fretting never lifts the load;
And that worry, much or little,
Never smooths an irksome road;
For you know that somehow, always,
Doors are opened, ways are made;
When we work and live in patience
Under all the cross that's laid.

He who waters meadow lilies
With the dew from out the sky,
He who feeds the flitting sparrows,
When in need for food they cry,
Never fails to help His children
In all things, both great and small;
For His ear is ever open
To our faintest far-off call.

(2) *It weakens and wears one out.*—Charles Kingsley well says: "Do to-day's duty, fight to-day's temptation, and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them." Under a habit of anxiety the body loses its vigour, the mind loses its tone, the will loses its force, and the heart loses its resiliency and sweetness. The innocent old farmer who wound up his alarm clock and fixed it to go off at six in the morning, and then sat up all night so as to be sure to hear it when it struck, but who was so exhausted by his tedious vigil that when the morning came he could not start on his projected journey, is a fair illustration of the mischief done to one by extreme anxiousness. Generals fight better; business men handle their business more successfully; teachers get more into and more out of their pupils; mothers conduct their households with greater ease and satisfaction, if they do not let any of their energies run to waste in anxiety.

¶ Anxiety has no place in the life of one of God's children. Christ's serenity was one of the most unmistakable signs of His filial trust. He was tired and hungry and thirsty and in pain; but we cannot imagine Him anxious or fretful. His mind was kept in perfect peace because it was stayed on God. The life lived by the faith of the Son of God will find His word kept: "My peace I give unto you."[1]

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 7.

¶ I desire to submit myself entirely to the will of God, and moreover that He would sanctify this trial both to me and mine. On coming to Brechin, I was led, through my youngest boy's behaviour, to see what a blessed thing it is to receive the kingdom of God "as a little child." My little fellow, about four years old, whom I brought with me, gave himself no trouble amid the boats, omnibuses, and railway coaches, on sea, land, and in dark tunnels: his father was at his side, and never a care, or fear, or doubt, or anxiety had he. May we have grace to be led by the hand, and trust to the care and kindness of a reconciled God and Father![1]

3. *The cause of anxiety.*—The cause of anxiety is distrust of God. Faith in God and a soul overwhelmed with misgivings come pretty near being mutually exclusive. At any rate a heart filled with the worry which narrows our spiritual horizons, and turns the sweet light of the stars into horrible darkness, has small place in it for any living and sustaining confidence in Him who notes the fall of a sparrow, and who has assured us that He is ready to take upon His own heart all our burdens of care. God has not promised to do everything for us; there are some things we must do for ourselves. But He has promised never to leave or forsake His own. He has promised to save unto the uttermost all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. He has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him. Our necessities, our straitnesses, our wants, our natural burdens, are not surprises to God. He understands them all, feels them all. But in the midst of them all, and with reference to them all, He wishes us to trust Him.

¶ Froude's religion, so far as it depended upon his conception of God, was a religion of almost unmixed fear. So far as it was of something better, it was purified, first, by a love and admiration for "the holy men of old," such as the founders of the Oxford Colleges, in whose steps, after his election to his Fellowship, he aspired to tread; secondly, by his affection for Keble, for whom, in the prayer written at the same time, he thanks God, as one who had convinced him of the error of his ways, and in whose presence he tasted happiness; but above all, by his devotion to his mother, in whose recollection he found a consciousness of that blessedness which he had been taught to look for in the presence of Saints and Angels. These were feelings which were

[1] Thomas Guthrie.

better than his religion, and which, if they could have developed and grown with the latter, might have delivered it from fears, and have converted it into a source of peace as well as of activity: but whether from the irremediable taint of the past, or owing to influence that proved too strong for Keble's, this growth did not go on.[1]

¶ Missing the Infinite, man grasps the finite good, clings passionately to it, and struggles with a melancholy earnestness to become his own Providence. But with faith in God—the belief that He has not launched a world into existence from which thereafter He sits remote, merely watching it, or now and then interfering to help a stumbling creature when it calls; the belief that He remains within His own creation, as its inmost and essential life; the great Sustainer, in whom it lives and moves, and has its being—with this faith, I say, the heart of the creature who is also a child, may well disburden itself of care. It is careful for nothing, simply because it believes that God is careful for everything; that His tender mercies are over all His works; and that the laws by which He governs the world are but the expressions of His living will, the signs of His immediate agency; not the handiwork of a retired Artificer, but the manifestation of an ever present God.[2]

¶ The crosses which we make for ourselves by over-anxiety as to the future are not heaven-sent crosses. We tempt God by our false wisdom, seeking to forestall His arrangements, and struggling to supplement His Providence by our own provisions. The fruit of our wisdom is always bitter. God suffers it to be so, that we may be discomfited when we forsake His Fatherly guidance. The future is not ours: we may never have a future; or, if it comes, it may be wholly different from all we foresaw. Let us shut our eyes to that which God hides from us in the hidden depths of His wisdom. Let us worship without seeing; let us be silent, and lie still. The crosses actually laid upon us always bring their own special grace and consequent comfort with them; we see the hand of God when it is laid upon us. But the crosses wrought by anxious forebodings are altogether beyond God's dispensations; we meet them without the special grace adapted to the need—nay, rather in a faithless spirit, which precludes grace; and so everything seems hard and unendurable. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," our Lord has said; and the evil of each day becomes good if we leave it to God.[3]

[1] E. A. Abbott, *Anglican Career of Cardinal Newman.*

[2] W. Knight, *Things New and Old*, 101.

[3] Fénelon, *Letters to Women.*

II.

A Precept.

"Let your requests be made known unto God."

Relief can never be obtained, and the Divine command of the text obeyed, by a mere effort of will. No man can shake off care simply by trying to do so. Neither can it be done by arguing with ourselves as to its uselessness and hurtfulness; nor yet can it be done, nor should it be attempted, by hardening ourselves into an unfeeling stoical indifference. Here is the better way, the only legitimate and effectual way of getting free from care. It is to cast our care on Him who cares for us. It is to bring the burden which we can neither bear nor shake off and leave it at the Lord's feet in prayer. Prayer is the only real and thorough cure for care. To be full of faith is the only effectual way to be empty of all fear. To flee with it within the veil, and to fall with it at the feet of God, is the only mode of being truly eased of the burden of anxiety and gloom. So "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

¶ A lady reports that, after the solemnities of a communion season, she and a friend were walking along Union Terrace, Aberdeen, behind Dr. Kidd and several of his brethren who had been assisting, when they heard him say—"Can you tell me how it is that, though I can bear great troubles as well as most men, the petty annoyances of life irritate me so that I say things which cause me much grief and shame afterwards, bring discredit on my Saviour's cause, and give the enemy cause to blaspheme?" The answer came from Mr. Rose, of Nigg—"Yes, brother; you carry your great trials to God, but the little ones you try to manage for yourself, and so fail." "Aye, aye; that is the true cause, I believe."[1]

1. *The means by which God would have us lay bare our hearts to Him—"by prayer and supplication."*

(1) *Prayer.*—The word which is here translated "prayer" refers not to the petitions, but to the mood of the petitioner. It describes a frame of mind. The soul can be in a prayerful attitude, even though it refrains from making requests. All real

[1] J. Stark, *Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen*, 259.

prayer begins, not in words, but in moods. The great mystics have ever been experts in the knowledge of this secret. They have disciplined their souls to a reverent and receptive pose, until, at all times, their souls have been frankly open to the Divine. They have bowed in silence before the Lord, rejecting, in the first place, the clumsy expedient of words, and they have quietly drawn in breath in the fear of the Lord. It is here that we find the explanation of Paul's counsel to "pray without ceasing." If essential prayer be a matter of words, the counsel is impossible; but if essential prayer be a spiritual posture, it is possible to obey the counsel throughout all the changing hours and moments of the years.

¶ Prayer is the great lever of the spiritual life: nay—to speak in various figures—it is the lung by which it breathes, it is the atmosphere in which it floats, the wing by which it speeds its flight, and the language by which it daily communes with its own Original.[1]

¶ Years ago an ingenious inventor tried to build a vessel in such a fashion that the saloon for passengers should remain upon one level, howsoever the hull might be tossed by waves. It was a failure, if I remember rightly. But if we are thus joined to God, He will do for our inmost hearts what the inventor tried to do with the chamber within his ship. The hull may be buffeted, but the inmost chamber where the true self sits will be kept level and unmoved. Prayer in the highest sense, by which I mean the exercise of aspiration, trust, submission—prayer will fight against and overcome all anxieties.[2]

(2) *Supplication.*—Actual petition for the supply of present wants is meant by "supplication." To ask for that supply will very often be to get it. To tell God what I think I need goes a long way always to bringing me the gift that I do need. If I have an anxiety which I am ashamed to speak to Him, that silence is a sign that I ought not to have it; and if I have a desire that I do not feel I can put into a prayer, that feeling is a warning to me not to cherish such a desire. There are many vague and oppressive anxieties that come and cast a shadow over our hearts, but if we could once define them, and put them into plain words, we should find that we vaguely fancied them a great deal larger than they were, and that the shadow they flung was im-

[1] W. Knight, *Things New and Old*, 114. [2] A. Maclaren.

mensely longer than the thing that flung it. Put your anxieties into definite speech. It will very often reduce their proportions to your own apprehension. Speaking of them, even to a man who may be able to do little to help, eases them wonderfully. Put them into definite speech to God; and there are very few of them that will survive.

¶ Some weavers were working diligently in an Eastern palace. The men and women wondered to see a little child amongst them, whose work always went smoothly on, without a break or even a snarl in the thread. They asked her how it happened that they could not succeed so well; their silk constantly got frayed and broken, and the beautiful pattern was worn and soiled by their mistakes and tears. The child answered: "I only go and tell the King." They declared that they did the same, going to Him once a week. "But," she softly answered,

"I go and get the knot untied
At the first little tangle."

That is the secret of perpetual peace. If we were only careful always to take our little anxieties to our King—and to leave them there—we should form habits strong enough to carry us triumphantly through every great crisis.[1]

We tell Thee of our care,
Of the sore burden pressing day by day;
And in the light and pity of Thy face
The burden melts away.

We breathe our secret wish,
The importunate longing which no man may see;
We ask it humbly, or, more restful still,
We leave it all to Thee.

The thorns are turned to flowers;
All dark perplexities seem light and fair;
A mist is lifted from the heavy hours,
And Thou art everywhere.[2]

(3) *Thanksgiving.*—"With thanksgiving." This may be taken to indicate both the general spirit in which suppliants should approach the Throne of Grace, and also an important and indispensable part of their worship. It may teach on the one hand that when we go into God's presence, however distressful our

[1] Dora Farncomb, *The Vision of His Face*, 142. [2] Susan Coolidge.

circumstances may be, we should not be moody, morose, doubtful; but rather, in respect to Him and His help, full of hope, and full of gratitude. It may teach on the other hand that while engaged in asking new blessings and fresh supplies of grace, we should not fail to call to mind and to record with thanks those that have been already received.

"With thanksgiving"—Paul would never omit that element from his receipt when giving his cure for care. Half our worries would immediately melt away if we began to sing a psalm of praise. Some anxieties can resist everything except thanksgiving. When that begins, they melt away like icebergs in tropical seas. The life that is ungrateful is very cold, and icebergs abound in its atmosphere. Let us raise the temperature and we shall be amazed at the results. A really thankful heart is so crowded with the sense of God's mercies that it can offer no hospitality to worry and care.

¶ Thanklessness is a parching wind, drying up the fountain of pity, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace. It is a destructive thing, an enemy of grace, hostile to salvation. As far as I have any insight, most dear brethren, nothing so displeases God in the sons of grace, the converted, as ingratitude. For it blocks up the way against grace, and where it is, thenceforth grace finds no access, no place. Thinkest thou that to such an one greater grace shall be given, and not rather what he seemeth to have be taken from him? For doth not that rightly seem to be lost which is given to one ungrateful? or may not God repent to have given what seemeth to be lost? Grateful then and devout must a man be, who longeth that the gift of grace which he hath received should not only abide with him, but be multiplied.[1]

¶ The circulations of the ocean constitute a plain and permanent picture of the relations between a human soul and a redeeming God. The sea is always drawing what it needs down to itself, and also always sending up of its abundance into the heavens. It is always getting, and always giving. So, when in the covenant the true relation has been constituted, the redeemed one gets and gives, gives and gets; draws from God a stream of benefits, sends up to God the incense of praise.[2]

¶ I myself am exceedingly variable in spirits, and I always find nothing is near so delightful and inspiriting when I am in low spirits as praising and thanking God in the midst of His

[1] St. Bernard.

[2] W. Arnot, *The Anchor of the Soul*, 90.

works. Often and often at the farm have I stood between the cottage and garden door and thanked God for making the world so fair and myself so susceptible of its beauty. I am generally quite happy after that.[1]

2. *The scope of our intercourse with God.*—"In everything." There is absolutely no restriction as to the kind of business that is to bring us to the Throne of Grace; and correspondingly there is no excuse for keeping any kind of burden to ourselves. It is not about what we call religious matters only, or even about great and important matters, whether sacred or secular, that we are permitted to go to God. It is about all matters whatsoever that concern us. Whatever touches our interests, whatever raises a care within our bosoms, whatever is worth an anxiety or thought, may be made, and should be made, the subject of prayer. He to whom we go is indeed the Infinite Jehovah; but He is also our Father, deeply interested in all that affects our welfare and comfort; and as there is nothing too great for His power to accomplish, so there is nothing too small for His condescension to notice.

He is not a man of little faith who puts little things into his prayer. That very thing shows him to be a man of great faith. A feeble pulsation in the heart may keep the life-blood circulating for a while near the centre and in the vitals; but it requires a great strong life in the heart to send the blood down into the tips of the fingers, and make it circulate through the outmost, smallest branches of the veins. In like manner, it is the strongest spiritual life that animates the whole course, even to the minutest transactions, and brings to God the smallest matters of our personal history as well as the great concern of pardon and eternal life.

¶ A multitude of little pimples may be quite as painful and dangerous as a large ulcer. A cloud of gnats may put as much poison into a man with their many stings as will a snake with its one bite. And if we are not to get help from God by telling Him about little things, there will be very little of our lives that we shall tell Him about at all. For life is a mountain made up of minute flakes. The years are only a collection of seconds. Every man's life is an aggregate of trifles.[2]

[1] Bishop Walsham How. [2] A. Maclaren.

Christ in You the Hope of Glory.

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CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.

To whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—Col. i. 27.

1. THE word "mystery" is one which has acquired in modern English a sense remote from its original signification. No one who recalls the original sense of the word—the sense which it bore for pagan ears—will suppose that when St. Paul talks of the mystery of the Gospel he means a doctrine which it is difficult or impossible to understand, and which has just to be accepted on authority. When an ancient Greek was initiated into the mysteries at Eleusis or Samothrace, he was not told something which he could not understand. The rites were called mysteries because they had a secret meaning—not known indeed to the world at large, but quite known and intelligible to the privileged body of the initiated. And so, when St. Paul borrows the word to express a Christian meaning, it is never a difficult or unintelligible truth that he has in view, but some truth which was once hidden, but is now revealed—revealed to all who have accepted the revelation of God in Christ. What he calls a mystery is always, indeed, a truth known only to the initiated, but the initiated for St. Paul are the whole body of baptized believers in Jesus.

¶ As when, in the early morning of a glorious summer day, the wreathing mists hide the mountain slopes and cover the valleys beneath, then, under the breath of the freshening wind, gradually lift and open, revealing some giant mountain top lost in the sky or woods and rocks on the hillsides, a ravishing vista of varied landscape, delighting the eyes and stimulating the imagination, showing that what was at first seen was cloud-like appearance only, and making manifest the solid realities and

dawning splendours behind and beyond—so a glimpse has been granted to us of the great purpose of God, seen in Christ, but only so far seen as to hint at unimagined reaches beyond—Christ in you, the hope of glory! St. Paul can hardly control his feelings as he approaches this theme. You have watched a smouldering match when plunged into a jar of oxygen burst into bright flame. So, when this messenger of Christ breathes the atmosphere of this Gospel, he flames forth in its celebration—"preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister!"[1]

¶ In our own little world we have glorious sun-light flooding ourselves and bathing all things round about us, flooding ourselves and bathing us every day of every year. It is a most wonderful thing, this light. In many respects it is an impenetrable mystery and incomprehensibility. But it is not a secret. It lies open to the perception of all.

Nor are flowers secrets. In many respects there are secrets in them, and incomprehensibilities too. But in actual fact they lie open to the perception of all, and are not secrets. Nor are trees, although laden with wonders. Nor is grass, or grain, nor is winter with its frosts and snows, or summer with its fragrances, or spring with its anniversary springings, or autumn with its rainbow tints. While there are scientific and philosophic mysteries and incomprehensibilities in all these terrestrial phenomena, not one of them is a mystery in the classic sense of the term. They are, as matters of fact, things unveiled, unmuffled, unmantled, lying open in Nature to every one's perception, so that he has but to look and see.

It is different with the Gospel. It does not lie quite on the surface of things around us, above us, and within us, especially in its glorious amplitude and universalities, and hence the Apostle, in *his* use of the word, calls it a "mystery." It had once been a secret, but it was now a secret no longer, at least to him. It had once been so much of a secret that to no mind but One was it known. It lay, as the Apostle expresses it in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "hid in God."[2]

2. The particular mystery which the Apostle here stands amazed at is the introduction of the Gentiles to equal privileges under the Gospel with the Jews; and, in particular, to this privilege—that Christ should make glory sure to them by dwelling in them.

[1] W. T. Davison, *The Indwelling Christ*, 270.
[2] J. Morison, *Sheaves of Ministry*, 37.

Now this was what set Paul at variance with his nation. They had no quarrel with many of his opinions, but when he threatened their pride of separation they struck at his life. He might talk as he would of God, of sin, of forgiveness, but when they heard that he was bringing a heathen man into the Temple, and when they saw that, on his theories, there was no need of a Temple at all, the worshippers in Jerusalem were transformed into a murderous mob from whose clutch he had to be rescued by Roman troops. Wise men do not run the risk of martyrdom in mere stubbornness, and when Paul speaks of "the mystery of Christ—for which I am in bonds," he does not vaguely mean the gospel, he means the freeness of the gospel. That is what had lain hidden in the mind of God, and it was for that he was "an ambassador in chains." In Ephesians iii. 4, 6, he is quite explicit. "Ye can perceive," he says, "my understanding in the mystery of Christ; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise." That, in Paul's view, was God's secret plan, hid from the ages and the generations, and now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets, and the text says that God willed it that this mystery should be made known among the Gentiles, not as bare fact, but as a very radiant and marvellous thing, a thing to sing about, a cause for which a man might very gladly live and die.

¶ It is strange in looking back to see how nearly this secret of gladness was anticipated ages before. In three Psalms—the 96th, 97th, and 98th—you will find a sudden burst of song, just as when the dawn comes and the birds awaken, and the cause of it is Paul's discovery that God is all the world's God. "Sing to the Lord a new song. . . . He has made known his salvation. He hath openly declared his righteousness in the sight of the nations. Let the sea roar," says the poet, "and the pride of its waves, the world and its people; let the tossing waves clap their hands, let the hills sing for joy before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and all the peoples with equity." It seemed as if at that time the full day of knowledge was at hand, but the time of promise passed, for "God enlargeth a nation, and straiteneth it again." Hearts which had expanded to take in the world, grew narrow and parochial, and darkness descended on the face of the earth. But now the day had come, and Paul felt his time too short for all he had to

do in letting men know that the great and merciful God was actually for them.[1]

3. Our subject is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Let us take it in this order—

I. Glory.
II. The Hope of Glory.
III. Christ in you the Hope of Glory.

I.

Glory.

1. What is glory? In our ordinary thought it is splendour, magnificence. We think of such a saying as "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Or we think, more sublimely, of the words, "They shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30). But in seeking a conception of glory suitable to our present text we should start with the incident in the Book of Exodus in which Moses desires to see the glory of God: "Shew me, I pray thee, thy glory." What is God's answer? He said: "I will make *all my goodness pass before thee*" (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19). The glory of God is therefore *His goodness made visible to us.* We see His glory when we see Him "gracious to whom I will be gracious," and shewing "mercy on whom I will shew mercy." The goodness of Christ on the earth was seen as He "went about doing good." That was His glory in the state of His humiliation.

¶ I cannot see for the glory of that light—there is to me just now such a light on the things of God that I cannot rightly see them. God is a glorious God—Christ is a glorious Christ—the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory is a very glorious object.[2]

2. But how is goodness made visible and seen at work in its highest manifestation? Surely in *love.* In the great Intercessory Prayer our Lord said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold

[1] W. M. Macgregor, *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, 242.
[2] "Rabbi" Duncan, in *Memoir of John Duncan, LL.D.*, 485.

my glory, which thou hast given me." What is that glory? "For," He added, "thou *lovedst* me before the foundation of the world." This is the highest glory. It is to love and be loved. It is love—the love of the Father to the Son and of the Son to the Father—recognized by men, seen, wondered at, and shared in, by men like the disciples.

¶ Heaven is nothing but the manifestation of the Eternal One, wherein all worketh and willeth in quiet love.[1]

¶ God has for ages been driving the mysteries of Heaven into sentences of one syllable. He began in allegory, passed on to parable, symbol, law, prophecy, and finally put the infinite into speech that a little child can utter. The sum of all the revelation of God is—Love.[2]

¶ The Passion does more than simply manifest the glory of Jesus. It opens to us the glory of a state, or spiritual condition, of which He is Lord by all the rights of that love with which He was glorified. We are called to this state, and we abide in it through fellowship with Him; more, we abide in it through the grace of vocation. The glory of the Crucified becomes likewise the glory of the faithful soul. The great love which burned in Him is to burn in us; the same utter selflessness and unworldliness must be in us as in Him. Here is, perhaps, the point where our own personal failures and personal difficulties come to mind. Jesus was glorified by the utter sacrifice of all to the supreme demand of Divine love. We are humiliated by the occasional triumphs in us of dispositions which we have not subjected to the law of Divine love. That is our sorrow; but it should also be the concern of our souls to bring all things so completely into subjection to Christ that He may throw around us the glory of His own love. It is the glory of love in the noblest, most heroic sense. We know how often the love which stirs us in devotion is found weak in the presence of demands which would reduce *self* to the uttermost, or call forth our energies in work which has no visible reward. Jesus was glorified in His Passion. We are glorified as we are made one with Him in love, which is most truly human because it is most gloriously Divine.[3]

3. And thus, last of all, the glory which is promised to the Colossians by the indwelling of Christ is that they shall be good

[1] Jacob Behmen. [2] S. Chadwick.
[3] J. Brett, *The Witness of Love*, 52.

as God is good, that their goodness shall be manifest in all men's sight, and that it shall be not merely a succession of acts of goodness but a spirit of love—such love in them, felt by them and exercised by them, as the love of the Father to the Son.

Recognize, then, the dignity, responsibility, destiny of human life. "Glory," in the Greek *doxa*, the practically untranslatable word, the word that means so much, is, in this context, the perfection of poor humanity, its emergence from its dark, lustreless condition, from the imprisonment in which it is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined," the old internal dualism gone, the lower law in the members subdued, atoned, at-one-d, to the higher. The glory of God the Father will be the emergence of humanity into the perfect freedom of the purer conditions when we shall be like the Christ, for "we shall see him as he is."

"Christ in me."

Who dares to grasp the truth?—In him alone
The law shall be fulfilled, and only he
Who passes from the vision of the Christ—
A righteousness for him—apart from him—
To share the fulness of the risen life—
The revelation of the Christ within,
Shall please God perfectly. O if the soul
Be truly emptied—yielded up to Him,
And He in all His fulness dwell within—
A Power to serve—a Zeal to watch and pray—
A Faith to claim the promises—a Love
To sympathize and win—a Patience learnt
In sorrows of His manhood, and a Crown
Won by a Cross—if such a Life be ours
As He has laid within the reach of all,
No pathway is too rough for us to tread—
No height beyond our reach—no task too hard
To be performed—no law of His too high
To be fulfilled in us. Lo! as we die
We also rise in Him and He in us![1]

4. This glory, it should be noticed, is not simply heaven, and it is not entirely future. Christ in us is the hope of the full manifestation of our character in love which never can be here; but it begins here. We love at once, as soon as we recognize

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Songs*, 86.

that He first loved us. And St. Paul does not hesitate to call the Corinthians and Colossians with all their shortcomings, "saints." Their goodness was not very visible or, perhaps, actually very great, but the possession of Christ was the assurance that they would attain to glory; and he salutes them on the way.

The immature faith of a Peter may fail and fall, but he can appeal from the very failure of his weakness to the heart of his love. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." The victory is gradual. We "go from strength to strength"; the "image of the earthly" is gradually effaced—the "image of the heavenly" is perfectly produced. In spiritual experience we are conscious of the indwelling Christ—in yearnings for God, in holy affections and growing sympathies, in passionate consecration, in pious, fervent, joyous worship, in ineffable communion. In our relations to our brother men, the indwelling of Christ is manifested in the purity, rectitude, and benevolence of all these relations. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The religious life that does not find expression in ways of piety, holiness, and unselfishness is spurious and worthless. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

¶ Holiness means, in the first place, perfect disinterestedness, indifference to earthly and human interests. Again, it implies a mind one with God, over which no shadow of uncleanness or untruth ever passes, which seeks only to know His will, and, knowing it, to carry it out in the world. To purity and truth it adds peace and a certain dignity derived from independence of all things. It is heaven upon earth—to live loving all men, disturbed by nothing, fearing nothing. It is a temper of mind which is unshaken by changes of religious opinion, which is not dependent upon outward observances of religion. Such a character we may meet with once or twice in a long life, and derive a sort of inspiration from it. And oh! that it were possible that some of us might, even in the days of our youth, find the blessedness of leading such a life in God's presence always.[1]

¶ The inward experience of a new creation, the actual formation of Christ, as the resident life within, "worked mightily" in Paul, and he called everybody to a similar experience. Few words

[1] Benjamin Jowett.

have ever borne a more touching appeal than that intimate personal call to his wavering friends in Galatia: "My little children, I am travailing in birth pains again for you until *Christ be formed in you.*" To the Roman Christians he says: "*If Christ be in you,* the sinful body is dead." To the Corinthian believers he says: "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you." . . . The Ephesian prayer carries us almost beyond what can be asked or thought—that "Christ may dwell in your hearts." And the Colossian letter declares that the riches of the glory of the Divine revelation is this: "Christ in you." It would be easy to multiply texts, but the mystical aspect of Paul's "Gospel" does not rest on isolated texts. It is woven into the very structure of his message. He cares not at all for the shell of religion. The survival of ceremonial practices are to him "nothing." Circumcision, which stands in his thought for the whole class of religious performances, "avails nothing." Everything turns on a "new creation." His aim is always the creation of a "new man," the formation of the "inward man," and this "inward man" is formed, not by the practice of rite or ritual, not by the laying on of hands, but by the actual incorporation of Christ—the Divine Life—into the life of the man, in such a way that *he who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.* Christ is resident within, and thereby produces a new spirit—a principle of power, a source of illumination, an earnest of unimagined glory.[1]

II.

The Hope of Glory.

1. If we require a little explanation of the word "glory," do we not at least understand the word "hope" at once? If one were to ask us if Christ is being formed in us, or if we are on the way to glory, what do we answer? Very often, "I hope so." Is that the Apostle's hope when he says "Christ in you the hope of glory"? No, nor is that the sense in which the word "hope" is ever used in the Bible of the Christian hope.

¶ Joy and peace are the causes of hope. But if you look again you will see near the beginning of the chapter (Rom. xv.) another source of it—"patience and comfort of the scriptures"; and I have always noted the combination of the two different occasions as full of blessed teaching. Not only the sunny and

[1] R. M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 14.

tranquil hours should produce it, but also the times when all we can do is to endure, and when all our comfort comes to us from God's Word.[1]

¶ Dean Stanley used hopefulness as a test of all systems of truth. Rightly so. God is the God of hope, and His truth, like Himself, carries the atmosphere of good cheer. The falsity of mediævalism appears in this—it robbed men of joy and gladness. God was the centre of darkness. His throne was iron. His heart was marble. His laws were huge implements of destruction. His penalties were red-hot cannon balls crashing along the sinner's pathway. Repentance toward God was moving toward the arctics and away from the tropics. Christianity was anything but "peace on earth, good will to men." Philosophers destroyed God's winsomeness. The Reformers came in to lead men away from mediævalism back to God Himself. Men found hope again in redemptive love. They saw that any conception of God that dispirited and depressed men was perverted and false. No man has done more to establish this fact than he who long ago said: "Any presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ that does not come to the world as the balmy days of May comes to the unlocked northern zones; any way of preaching the love of God in Christ which is not as full of sweetness as the voice of the angels when they sang at the Advent; any way of making known the proclamation of mercy which has not at least as many birds as there are in June and as many flowers as the dumb meadows know how to bring forth; any method of bringing before men the doctrine of salvation which does not make every one feel, 'There is hope for me in God—in the Divine plan, in the very nature of the organization of human life and society,' is spurious—is a slander on God and is blasphemy against His love."[2]

2. What, then, does the Bible say about hope? It speaks of "the full assurance of hope." Is that the same as "I hope so"? It says that "hope is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." Ask the seaman as he throws his anchor overboard if it will hold. Does he say, "I hope so"? He looks at the great iron claws of it and he answers that he is sure it will hold, if there is anything to hold by. We have a hope which is placed on that Saviour and Lord who has ascended to the right hand of the Father. It "entereth within the veil." There is something to hold by there. Our hope is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

[1] *Dr. M'Laren of Manchester*, 246.

[2] N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 290.

¶ Mr. Watts some time before received a letter which had moved him profoundly. It was written by a stranger to tell him in the simplest language that in a dark hour of life in a grimy northern town a photograph of his picture of "Hope" had arrested attention at a moment of extreme crisis. The photograph had been bought with a few remaining shillings and the message pondered, and so for one life the whole course of events had been changed. The letter concluded with these words: "I do not know you, nor have I ever seen the face of him who gave me my 'Hope,' but I thank God for the chance of that day when it came to me in my sore need." I read some of these simple words to Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and when I next looked up I saw in his moistened eyes how deeply they had touched him.[1]

¶ When God, of His own determinate counsel, willed to clothe His thought in a human race, and willed to train His human thought-children by the drastic process of exposure to evil, that out of the bitterness of contrast they might ultimately choose and tenaciously cleave to the good, He did it, Paul says, in hope. "The creature," says the Apostle, "was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope." Does that imply uncertainty? No. God's hope is a "shall." "Therefore," he continues, "the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."[2]

¶ Of all the virtues, hope is the most distinctively Christian (it could not, of course, enter definitely into any pagan scheme); and, above all others, it seems to me the *testing* virtue,—that by the possession of which we may most certainly determine whether we are Christians or not; for many men have charity, that is to say, general kindness of heart, or even a kind of faith, who have not any habitual *hope* of, or longing for, heaven.[3]

The hailstorm and sunshine contended,
As I sheltered beneath the broad tree;
Each its claim to be master defended,
With furious persistency;
And so fierce was the challenge,
So even the balance,
I could not the issue foresee.

[1] Mrs. Watts, in *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 269.
[2] B. Wilberforce, *The Hope of Glory*, 17.
[3] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice* (*Works*, x. 399).

But soon the stern fight was decided,
When a bow threw its span o'er the storm,
And the cold blinding tempest subsided,
While joy to my bosom leapt warm;
For that bow in the sky,
Flashed its message on high,
"Let Hope all thy doubtings disarm."

Thus darkness and light through the ages,
Wrath and mercy, alternate have reigned;
Nor had all the world's mightiest sages,
The key to the riddle attained;
Till the shining God-Man,
On the clouds wrote Heaven's plan,
"Perfection through suffering gained."[1]

III.

Christ in You the Hope of Glory.

1. How can Christ be in us? Is He not in heaven: throned in glory everlasting? He is, yet is He in us. As to the body, He is on the throne of the Highest. The loving Man rules the courts of heaven. But He is in us as to His Spirit.

All the relations of my soul to Christ are personal, vital, and conscious. He "knocks at the door of my heart," and tells me that if I will open unto Him He will come in unto me; not merely to worship with me, or to hold formal religious fellowship with me, but to "sup with me"—to mingle with the pursuits, to inspire the joys of my common life. If I refuse to admit Him, He bewails my refusal with tears: "If thou hadst known;" "How often would I have gathered thee!" "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." He comes to me in individual recognition, in personal inspiration, in intelligent fellowship, in affectionate sympathy, in discriminating help. I speak to Him all my thoughts and feelings. I tell Him my secret in the common prayer of the congregation. He blesses me with an individual application of the common grace. I consciously hold intercourse with Him, in more intimate, uncalculating confidence

[1] T. Crawford, *Horæ Serenæ*, 69.

than a man with his friend. He represents Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep, as calling His own sheep by name and leading them out. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

How individual it all is! What a unique conception of religious life and inspiration it is! His is not a common benevolence; it is a personal, discriminating love. Mine is not a general loyalty, it is a distinctive affection and service—a worship, a consecration, and, if needs be, a martyrdom.

¶ There is such a thing as Jeremy Taylor, in one of his chapters on "Holy Living," calls the "Practice of the Presence of God." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age," says the omnipresent Master; and there is no greater need than that this presence shall be recognized and felt. It cannot be detected by the physical senses, for it is not a sensible fact. But to him who cultivates the sensibility to the unseen and exercises his inner senses to discern good and evil, the reality of the presence of Christ may become as indisputable as anything demonstrable by the bodily organs. Such communion with a personal Christ assimilates character to His likeness. "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."[1]

¶ An unknown writer has left us the following beautiful words: "It is not so much working for God, or speaking for God, as *living in the secret of His presence*, which most glorifies Him. We must so seek to realize our Saviour's presence with us and in us that our whole being shall be hushed, and quietly elevated, and controlled in every little thing." That is an inspiring picture of the life we might live. It is what God intends, for St. Paul has told us plainly, "He that is joined unto the Lord is *one spirit*." This communion with God is surely the highest and most sacred of all attainments. If hourly we hold sweet fellowship with Christ, our moral strength will be continually invigorated, and our spiritual life can never decline. It is like the sweet gravelly bed at the foot of the flowing stream. No impurity can lodge there. It is ceaselessly purged by the river of life. Surely there is nothing higher than this to wish for.[2]

[1] A. J. Gordon, *How Christ came to Church*, 77.

[2] J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 90.

2. There are two phrases—"We in Christ" and "Christ in us." "We in Christ" is safety: we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel. "Christ in us" is sanctification: Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith means that we are "able to comprehend with all the saints, and to know the love of Christ," until we are "filled unto all the fulness of God."

¶ Think seriously, you who are in Christ, of that life in Christ which you ought to live. And how will you say, one day, that your life has been lived, according to the life of Christ, if Christ has not dwelt in the details, the constituents of that life; if your own desires, your own thoughts, your own wisdom, your own interests, your own glory, your own ease, have been the mainspring of your actions? If this has been the case from minute to minute, from hour to hour, without a thought of Christ or His word, without the influence of His Spirit, how will you be able even to *suppose* hereafter that you have *lived in Christ*?[1]

I saw Thee at the cross,
Where Thou didst die that we might live;
And love possessed my heart,
When Thou didst cry "Forgive."

I saw Thee at the tomb,
When all Thy passion tide was o'er;
I joyed to hear Thee say,
"Alive for evermore."

"Alive for evermore!"
So when to death I shall draw nigh,
Then Thou wilt take my hand;
I shall not fear to die.

I shall not fear to die!
But worse than fear of death is sin;
So, more than help without,
I ask for Thee within.

I ask for Thee within,
Yea, in my heart victorious be!
That I transformed by love
May live my life in Thee.[2]

3. "Christ in you." If we give due weight to phrases like this, phrases of which the New Testament is full, and which

[1] *The Life of Cæsar Malan*, 166. [2] Bishop Boyd Carpenter.

speak, as one may say, the common-sense of religion, we see once more that the thought of the Atonement is not of any external sacrifice. Rather the Atonement, so far as we are concerned, is some spiritual change, some change of the inmost soul in its relation to God. We cannot trust in an external sacrifice, not even in the death of the Son of God, if all the while we are content to go on living with quite a different spirit in our lives from His. We know how people sometimes talk about trusting in Christ, and of looking to Christ alone for salvation, as if all this were possible without the great interior change, the change of character which comes from the actual dwelling of Christ in the soul. We have heard people talk, perhaps, of trusting in Christ, and of looking to Him for salvation, when their lives showed very little of His Spirit, when their hearts seemed to be set mainly if not entirely upon the things of this world, upon material comfort and ease, if not upon money-making and pleasure, and upon the selfish enjoyment of these things, without a thought of helpfulness to others, without a notion of spending in the cause of God something like the same proportion of time and money that they spend on their own families or their own establishments, without a thought of the great needs of the world and of their responsibility for meeting them.

¶ Thus it is that you are to conceive of the holy Jesus, or the Word of God, as the hidden treasure of every human soul, born as a seed of the Word in the birth of the soul immured under flesh and blood.

If Christ was to raise a new life like His own in every man, then every man must have had originally, in the inmost spirit of his life, a seed of Christ, or Christ as a seed of heaven.

For we cannot be inwardly led and governed by a spirit of goodness but by being governed by the Spirit of God Himself. For the Spirit of God and the spirit of goodness are not two spirits, nor can we be said to have any more of the one than we have of the other.

The Christian religion is no arbitrary system of Divine worship, but is the one true, real, and only religion of nature: that is, it is wholly founded in the nature of things, has nothing in it supernatural or contrary to the powers and demands of nature; but all that it does is only in, and by, and according to the workings and possibilities of nature.

A Christ not in us is the same as a Christ not ours.[1]

[1] William Law, *The Spirit of Love*.

(1) The secret of the growth of the Christ in us is the practice of quick mental concentration, in every moral crisis, upon the Presence in which we "live, move, and have our being." Witness, in the hidden lives of the greatest men, the strengthening effect of this practice. Such men will make what we call mistakes (though there are no mistakes in the full purpose of God—the mistakes are part of the purpose, and men and nations learn as much by their mistakes as by their successes). They may make mistakes; but they are kept in perfect peace, because their minds are stayed on Him.

¶ In *The Life of Gladstone*, by Lord Morley, the biographer has given us glimpses, from Mr. Gladstone's most private diary, of this ceaseless lifting up of the heart, always, everywhere, in every crisis. It was his custom when waiting to catch the Speaker's eye, in the House of Commons, to occupy the interval in intense mental prayer. On one occasion, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, before rising to make his first great budget speech, his lips were observed moving. Members might have thought he was rehearsing his figures. His diary tells us what he was doing. He was murmuring the words of the Psalmist, "Turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength to thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid."[1]

(2) The truest evidence of the reality of this life is that sense of common love, that thrill of common sympathy, which leads us to care for others and to work for others. Let us determine that the world shall be somewhat the better that we are living in it, and we shall be giving practical outward expression to that "mystery hid from the foundation of the world"—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

¶ I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ. I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before—I thought that it was just smiling upon me; and, as I walked out upon Boston Common and heard the birds singing in the trees, I thought they were all singing a song to me. Do you know, I fell in love with the birds. I had never cared for them before. It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man, and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he has never been regenerated. If you hear a person get up in the prayer-

[1] B. Wilberforce, *Speaking Good of His Name.*

meeting and begin to find fault with everybody, you may doubt whether his is a genuine conversion; it may be counterfeit. It has not the right ring, because the impulse of a converted soul is to love, and not to be getting up and complaining of every one else and finding fault.[1]

Why do I dare love all mankind?
'Tis not because each face, each form
Is comely, for it is not so;
Nor is it that each soul is warm
With any Godlike glow.
Yet there's no one to whom's not given
Some little lineament of heaven,
Some partial symbol, at the least, in sign
Of what should be, if it is not, within,
Reminding of the death of sin
And life of the Divine.

There was a time, full well I know,
When I had not yet seen you so;
Time was, when few seem'd fair;
But now, as through the streets I go,
There seems no face so shapeless, so
Forlorn, but that there's something there
That, like the heavens, doth declare
The glory of the great All-fair;
And so mine own each one I call;
And so I dare to love you all.[2]

4. These signs appear when Christ is in us—

(1) *Life is sanctified.*—Sad it is that so many of the most earnest souls are looking in the wrong direction for sanctification. It comes not along any path outside of us. It journeys by the inward way. It is by the yielding up of the nature to the indwelling Christ that true holiness is achieved.

Christ is far more than One who stands behind all the developments of life, as originating Source. It is equally true that in Him all things consist. The bond of inter-relationship between all life and all lives is His essential Being. All the rhythmic order of the universe is created by the presence of the Christ, so that He is immanent, the Centre of the believer's life, and transcendent,

[1] D. L. Moody, in *Life*, by his son.

[2] Henry Septimus Sutton, *A Preacher's Soliloquy and Sermon.*

its Sphere. Wherever the Christian looks he sees the Christ. At dawning of the morning His face makes it more beautiful. When the sun goes westering, and the shadows of the evening are growing, the consciousness of His presence is sleep. When the battle thickens, He rides at the head of His battalions, and leads to victory. When peace is declared, it is His benediction falling upon the sons of men. Christ is everywhere, and to the man who knows what it is to have Christ in him, the hope of glory, whether he look up or down or out or back Christ's face is there.

¶ Christianity is in its essence devotion to a Person—not to a sacred memory, not to an ideal of conduct, not to any glorious hope for the future, but to a living Person who stands before us to-day as really as He stood before the disciples of John, as really as He stood before Pontius Pilate, some nineteen centuries ago. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus Christ?" This is the practical question that is left with us by the answering of our riddle; by the appearing before us of Christ, the final answer. His way of giving answer is to enter into our life as Saviour and Teacher and Friend. And it is only by our coming thus into fellowship with Him, and allowing our characters to be transformed into the likeness of His own that He can be to us in the final and complete sense the answer to our riddle. "Prophet and apostle can only be understood by prophet and apostle," says Emerson. And Carlyle gives expression to the same truth when he says that "the sincere alone can recognize sincerity." A spirit can be understood only by a kindred spirit. To understand another, one must have with that other some common ground; and perfect understanding can come only with perfect likeness. It is only when we begin to be like Christ that we begin to know Him as He is. And He comes to us, to open our eyes and to change our hearts, that we may both see Him and be like Him.[1]

(2) *The character is uplifted to a throne.*—If He dwells in me, my nature becomes His palace, and He, my King, reigns there with unchallenged rule. He does His own sweet will therein. It is mine to obey Him. My King commands within me, and I delight to do His will. "Christ in you."

¶ Obedience in its highest form is not obedience to a constant and compulsory law, but a persuaded or voluntarily yielded obedience to an issued command; and so far as it was a *persuaded* submission to command, it was anciently called, in a passive sense,

[1] J. B. Maclean, *The Secret of the Stream*, 34.

"persuasion," or πίστις, and in so far as it alone assuredly did, and it alone *could* do, what it meant to do, and was therefore the root and essence of all human deed, it was called by the Latins the "doing," or *fides*, which has passed into the French *foi* and the English *faith*.[1]

¶ We are to do His will, and thus we shall gradually understand the doctrine which He has taught us concerning Himself. Thus it is that in our earthly relations we get to be acquainted with those who are higher and better than ourselves. We have first of all to learn to obey them whether we can see the reason or no; and by and by we come to see the reason, and to understand the kindness of our advisers. Thus it is that a soldier gains confidence in his general, or a patient in his physician, or a son in his father; thus it was that our Lord's apostles learned by degrees to acknowledge that in Jesus Christ they "beheld the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"; thus it is that each of us must learn to confess "The Lord is in this place and I knew it not."[2]

(3) *We know the ways of God.*—Christ is the true "inward light." The Christian does not depend so much on arguments without as on illumination within. The indwelling Christ witnesses truth to me and rejects error. Many a difficult religious problem is easily solved if Christ dwell in us. He conducts a teaching ministry within us. He settles many a point of criticism, Biblical and theological. "We shall not full direction nced" if Christ be in us. The indwelling Christ authenticates the things of God to our intellect and heart and conscience.

¶ There is an incident recorded by the Archbishop of Armagh, in his book *Primary Convictions*, which illustrates this. He tells us how on board a great Atlantic steamer he happened on one Sunday evening to take down and read a certain chapter in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. It told him how back through inconceivable æons his origin can be traced to the *amphioxus*, a thing almost a worm, with scarcely a brain or rudiment of a vertebral column. From it through long lines of development can be traced the highest form of vertebrates, the human race. "I retired to rest," he says, "almost dismayed. The majestic induction, the colossal industry, was not to be gainsaid. But as I lay awake in my cabin I heard presently the burst of an organ, and voices went out over the starlit sea in chants and hymns.

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (*Works*, vii. 213). [2] Hurrell Froude.

The vast ship was rushing along at over twenty miles an hour, and I could see through the little window of the porthole the water cut into white swathes of foam. What words were those? 'Lead, kindly Light,' 'There is a green hill far away.' Then I felt that the question is, not what man may have been, but what he is; not what he is like, but what he can do; not what organism may have been employed in moulding his body, but what he has become. . . . The being who triumphs over the waves, who raises strains whose very sweetness 'giveth proof that they were born for immortality,' may have come from the humble *amphioxus* or from something lower still, 'the dust of the ground'; but he is the child of God by nature, and made for a yet higher sonship. 'Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'"[1]

¶ You say you want "proof" of the fact of God having a will which He wishes us to fulfil. But how is that to be proved to you as long as you refuse to try to fulfil the will? It is like a starving man refusing to eat until he has "proof" that food will nourish him. If he eats he will find the proof in himself; so will you, if you try to do God's will, find the evidence that there is a Divine will and that it is the life of a human creature to fulfil it. You do not know what is God's will in itself, but you know that what is right is according to that will, you can try to do what is right, and in that effort you will learn that what is right is Divine, and that only through faith in and union with the Divine is the human perfected. I don't ask you to do right because it is God's will, but to do God's will because *it* is right, and when you are in doubt as to what is God's will, to do what your conscience bids you, and your doubt will disappear.[2]

(4) *We have a new sense of self-reverence.*—If my body be His shrine can I desecrate that shrine? All wrong done to the body or to any part of human personality is sacrilege. One in whom Christ dwells must reverence himself. Such cannot be merely self-respecting, they will be self-reverential—not self-conceited, but self-awed! Herein is the explanation of the dignity which graces many of the humblest Christians. We not seldom wonder at the refinement of spirit and of manner manifested by some who are poor and unschooled. We call it "native refinement." But it is not "native." It springs from the consciousness of Christ

[1] G. Nickson, in *The Record*, Nov. 6, 1908.
[2] *Memoir of Robert Herbert Story*, 153.

mystical. Lowly people are noble-mannered when Christ is homed in their hearts.

¶ It was in the light of the Incarnation that men dared to speak of the human body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, of our being members of Christ's body, and even dared tersely to express the place of the body in the designs of God by saying, "The Lord is for the body." It was this conception that gave new value and sanction to the work of ministering to the weakly and sick, and new direction to Christian compassion and charity. It gave new importance and meaning to physical self-control, to cleanliness, to sexual purity, to abstinence; and finally it encouraged the discharge of reverent and decent offices to the bodies of the dead, with self-restraint in mourning, and uniform tenderness to the frail tenement of the human spirit. We are, indeed, guilty of sham spirituality when we forget the connexion of these things with the Incarnation of the Son of God, and their witness to that deep saying, "The Lord is for the body."[1]

(5) *There is a fount of sweetest comfort within.*—What soothes amid sorrow like the consciousness of the indwelling Christ? This is a pure deep fount of consolation in the heart, more refreshing far than the most sparkling fountain by the way. How would some of you sustain the heavy burdens of life save for Christ being in you? In the extremes of pain and woe what has upheld you but this? What supported you on the sad journey to the cemetery, and on the sadder journey home again, excepting this alone—"Christ in you"? This glowing centre of Christian experience is ardent consolation.[2]

¶ "God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives," cries Garfield to the crowd in the panic following the assassination of Lincoln. "Had I not perceived the Lord was at the helm I should long ago have given up the struggle," writes Zwingli in the throes of the Reformation struggle. "I lay my head to-night upon the bosom of Omnipotence" is Rutherford's explanation of calmness in the presence of difficulty and loss. These are the men of whom it is true that

> Looking backward thro' our tears
> With vision of maturer scope,
> How often one dead joy appears
> The platform of some better hope![3]

[1] G. A. Johnston Ross, in *Youth and Life*, 12.
[2] D. T. Young, *The Crimson Book*, 145.
[3] G. Nickson, in *The Record*, Nov. 6, 1908.

"Christ in us"!—who can reach the depth and height,
The length and breadth of such a gift as this?
In weakness He is strength, in darkness light,
Amidst the world's distress an untold bliss,
Treasures of wisdom to a simple mind,
Riches of grace the contrite heart to bless,
A clear and open vision to the blind,
And to the naked soul a comely dress;
Compared with this all other gifts are dim:
Poor in ourselves, yet we have all in Him.

With "Christ in us," our glorious hope is sure;
Dwelling in Him the true and living way,
Our souls are safe, and to the end endure;
Through faith all sin and guilt on Him we lay:
See through the veil our great High Priest within,
Prepared His own redeemed ones to bless;
Himself made sin for us, who knew no sin,
That we might perfect righteousness possess;
While by His Spirit, dwelling in our hearts,
His peace, His joy, His glory He imparts.[1]

[1] John Streatfeild, *Musings on Scriptural Subjects.*

Complete in Christ.

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Complete in Christ.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full.—Col. ii. 9, 10.

In the previous part of this far-reaching letter the Apostle had been exalting the Christ, who, he declared, was the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. He was no mere child of man—no mere hero of the race or wise member of the common family. He was all this, it is true; but He was far more, and the superhuman element of His nature was the differentiating peculiarity of His unique personality. If He had been only the greatest man, there might yet be a greater, before whose throne Christ Himself would require to bow. If He had been an angel —one of the hierarchies of heaven,—there might, in the future, be a greater, to whom the Christ of Paul would require to give place. But the One whom the Apostle set forth was more than man, more than cherubim or seraphim. He could be loved with a perfect love; obeyed with full and constant obedience; worshipped with the whole spirit. Such service rendered to Him would be a reasonable service in harmony with what is right and becoming. From this position the Colossians were not to depart, or allow themselves to be driven, for, says the Apostle, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," adding by way of practical application the important truth, "and ye are complete in him," or as the Revised Version has it, "in him ye are made full," that is, completed, made perfect—He is the complement of your being.

¶ The later Jewish theologians had laid much stress upon the delivery of the Sinaitic Law through the agency of angels acting as delegates for the Most High God. The Author of Christianity might be superior to Moses and the prophets, but could He challenge comparison with those pure and mighty spirits

compared with whom the greatest of the sons of Israel, as beings of flesh and blood, were insignificant and sinful? The answer is, that if Christ is not the peer of the angels, this is because He is their Lord and Master. The angels are ministers of the Divine will; they are engaged in stated services enjoined on them towards creatures lower than themselves, yet redeemed by Christ. But He, in His glory above the heavens, is invested with attributes to which the highest angel could never pretend. In His crucified but now enthroned Humanity, He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high; He is seated there, as being Heir of all things; the angels themselves are but a portion of His vast inheritance.[1]

I.

Christ's Fulness.

The word "fulness" means that which is filled, made perfect, made complete. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," that is to say, all that the earth contains is the Lord's. And the meaning of the text is that all the natural, the moral attributes or qualities of the Eternal God are in the person under consideration. If any one attribute or quality were omitted, any one element of His being were left out, it would be impossible for inspiration to say that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."[2]

¶ The year 1899, which proved so sadly eventful, opened for Berry and his people with some degree of confidence and hope. In a letter written to the *Christian World*, dated January 3rd, he thanked his friends for countless kindly messages he had received, and "for the light they shed upon many dark hours, and the courage they inspired when pain brought peril and hope was dim." He had gained strength since his return home, and was able to preach once on each of the five Sundays in January. His second sermon was on "Completeness in Christ," Colossians ii. 10, and dealt with the reality, the closeness, the richness of the believer's union with Christ. "We are more than followers, learners, friends; we are bound to Him in a more than natural relation, one that is vital, organic, dependent, and derivative, and that 'more' is expressed by the phrase 'In Christ.' All that is His is ours and ours His. *His* our sin, our penitence, our fears, our weakness, our hope. *Ours* His death, His resurrection, His reign, His dominion."[3]

[1] H. P. Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, 321. [2] D. D. McLaurin.

[3] J. S. Drummond, *Charles A. Berry, D.D.*, 203.

¶ A heresy, a subtle, poisonous, destructive heresy was invading the fold of that little Church. The heresy was this. Matter is essentially and inherently evil. Flesh is inherently and essentially evil. It is the natural home of evil. God is essentially, inherently holy, and between the essentially, inherently holy God and the inherently and essentially evil flesh there can be no communion. That was the beginning of the heresy. Then this question was propounded: How, then, can the essentially holy God come into contact with essentially evil man? And here is what the heresy devised—that out of the holy Deity there emanated a presence with holiness slightly diluted, and out of the second emanation there came a third, with the holiness again further diluted, and so on, from emanation to emanation, in ever-decreasing holiness, with ever-increasing impoverishment of Divinity, until the last emanation you come to is one slightly better than evil man himself, and those two can touch and hold fellowship and communion. That is to say, that between God and essentially evil matter there had been constructed a bridge, with decreasing gradients of Divinity, each one less Divine than the one behind it, until there comes one in the distant chain who is so little better than ourselves that we can touch and have communion and fellowship.

What was the effect of that heresy upon the little Church? That little Church of Colossæ began to think that God was infinitely remote because of His holiness; that between them there was a perfect hierarchy of beings through whom they had to communicate if they wanted to get to Him—first to the one nearest, and through him to the next, and through him to the next, and on in the ascending scale until, in the far, far, almost infinite distance they touched God. That was the heresy invading that little Church and destroying its Christian faith. What was the result? There were two theological results. First, it certainly destroyed the sovereign lordship and ascendancy of Jesus. Whatever else we can say about Jesus, He was the One that touched. He touched the Magdalene, and worse than the Magdalene. He touched Zacchæus, and He touched the leper. He touched; but by this heresy it was the last link in the chain that touched. It was the one whose deity was most diluted. It was the last link. It was the One nearest unto ourselves who came to save. I say that destroys the lordship of Jesus; I say that, if that heresy were true, then between the Lord Jesus and the throne there were a thousand lords and sovereigns higher than He. He was unthroned, and became a little better than you and I. Our Lord Jesus, by this theory, was on the next step of

the ladder, and between Him and the highest there was an infinitely remote scale of beings more Divine than He. But it not only destroys the lordship of Jesus, it destroys the supreme mediatorship of Christ. If between us and God there is a long chain of intermediate beings, then His mediatorship is destroyed, and I do not wonder that men began to worship angels. If I thought my Lord was only at the next step of the gradient from me, and beyond there were angels, and principalities and powers, I should want to be at them, and should want to pray to them, and their influence I should seek to discover. A heresy like that dethrones the Son of God. As for the ethical results, they are quite as clear and quite as sure and quite as dangerous. The extraordinary thing is that in this little Christian Church the men who were victimized by its heresy chose two absolutely different ways. One party said: "If flesh is essentially evil, if the evil is native to flesh, then in evil there is no shame; if that is its natural home, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And so they rushed into licentiousness. There was another party who said: "If flesh is essentially evil, spurn it, maul it, bruise it, spit upon it, refuse it ordinary decencies; decline to wash it, withhold ordinary courtesy, stamp on it." That was what Paul was facing when he said: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost."

What did Paul say of Jesus in the light of that heresy? "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here is no dilution of God, no impoverished remnant. Here is no washed-out Divinity. "In him dwelleth all the fulness." Does that not play havoc with the heresy?[1]

1. *All* the fulness of God is in Christ. Our Lord is not a mere emanation of God; not a mere flash of light, but its very brightness; not a mere tone of the truth, but the veritable Word. "All the fulness of the Godhead," that is, the whole unbounded powers and attributes of Deity, the term used being the abstract term Godhead, instead of the more usual term God, in order to express with the utmost force the thought of the indwelling in Christ of the whole essence and nature of God. "Bodily"—that points to the Incarnation, and so is an advance upon the passage in the former chapter (ver. 19), which speaks of the "fulness" dwelling in the Eternal Word, whereas this speaks of the Eternal Word in whom the fulness dwelt, becoming flesh. So we are directed to the glorified corporeal humanity of Jesus Christ in

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Weekly*, April 6, 1911, p. 4.

His exaltation as the abode, now and ever, of all the fulness of the Divine nature, which is thereby brought very near to us. This grand truth seems to Paul to shiver to pieces all the dreams of these teachers about angel mediators, and to brand as folly every attempt to learn truth and God anywhere but in Him.

¶ It is not simply that in Jesus, the founder of Christianity, there suddenly appeared in Palestine a fuller exhibition than elsewhere in history of qualities which we count in a vague sense Divine—of spiritual insight, of moral purity and philanthropy and love. So much, at least, will every modern thinker grant; but it is that in Him was then, and in Him is now, though now unseen, very God, in actual, vital union with this fallen manhood, rich with the plenitude of infinite grace and power, a fresh, living centre and head of re-creative influence for men, able to make all human things new. This, and no less, is what we believe and teach; this, and no less, is what I venture to think the world wants; for short of this Divine mystery and miracle of the God-Man reuniting man to Godhead by the life of love and righteousness, giving Himself for us and to us, and so from Himself, as the spiritual head and centre of mankind, remaking both manhood and mankind—I say, apart from that and short of that, I know not where to look for a gospel, a veritable "good-news" for this stricken earth, a "glad tidings of great joy" to all people.[1]

2. All the fulness of God was incarnate in Christ's *humanity*. It dwelt in Him "bodily." The purity, righteousness, wisdom, compassion, love, of God were gathered up in that human life. He was Immanuel—God with us. False teachers, imagining that matter was essentially evil, could not brook the thought of the Divine Redeemer linking Himself for ever with a human body, and they either denied the reality of His body, or its inseparable connexion with Him for ever. Paul says the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ in a bodily way. "The Word was made flesh." Some have thought to make this fact seem impossible by absurd representations, which go on the assumption that an infinite God cannot enter a finite being without ceasing to be infinite. How He can do so we cannot understand. This is not a subject which admits of being rationalized. But dogmatic objectors may be reminded that it is their teaching

[1] J. Oswald Dykes.

which sets a limit to the infinite by proclaiming its inability to enter fully a finite being. Does not the infinity of God involve, not the distribution of innumerable parts through all space, but His presence wholly in every region of the universe? Why, then, cannot He manifest His presence in a peculiar way in one being? Moreover, if God, who is always infinite, can dwell in man at all, that fact is a mystery which seems to foreshadow the greater mystery of His full dwelling in Christ. The humanity of Christ is real and pure and perfect humanity, and God who dwells in Him is still perfect God. This is very different from the metamorphosis of a God into a man that is described in heathen mythologies. It is to be practically learnt from this Christian mystery that God is now very near to us in a brother man; that we can be raised to God and become one with Christ and God through Christ's oneness with us and God.

¶ The Incarnate Logos is *human*; for how could He in whom men are constituted be other than human? But He was not and is not *a* man. He is the constitutor of man, entering into a new relation to that which He had constituted like Himself, in order that, instead of losing its likeness to and vital union with Himself, and thereby its very existence, through sin, it might throw off sin, and resume the character it had borne and re-enter on the development for which it was intended. He could not have discharged this function had He and humanity not been essentially akin; it would have been equally impossible for Him to discharge the function had He been a man. He was the Divine Logos, self-limited; and as such doubly akin to, though not one with or of, humanity—self-limited in order to save that which had its life through, and was, in a very real sense, part of Himself.[1]

3. All the fulness of God is *permanent* in Christ. "In him dwelleth." The word "dwelleth" means more than a temporary sojourn. It means to live as in a house abidingly. To a Christian there is nothing more delightful than the thought that the Son of God, the Eternal, now dwells in the bodily manifestation which He took with Him to glory. We shall see Him, we shall know Him, for He is the God now dwelling in the body.

¶ The most deeply affectionate natures are limited in heart-power. Their love will languish under shock and cool in frigid

[1] D. W. Simon, *Reconciliation by Incarnation.*

atmospheres. In Christ love's fulness dwells. His compassions fail not. The drain upon His sympathies in the days of His flesh was continuous and tremendous. The world to Him was as the daughter of the horse-leech crying "Give, give!" Yet it was ever met by a full response. Even that awful frost which descended on Calvary, when the treachery of one disciple and the desertion of others, coupled with the mockings of enemies, drove the temperature about Him down to arctic depths; when even the gates of heaven seemed to close against Him and He was left for one terrible space uncomforted of God, the fountain of His grace stood at the full. It still pulsed on undiminished. No drain could lower it, no frost could seal it. Whilst His enemies mocked His agonies He could pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." With the heavens black and seemingly pitiless above Him, He could cry with loving confidence and filial submissiveness, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Under every circumstance we find Him a fountain "full of grace and truth."[1]

¶ It is a person, not a dogma, which invites my faith; a person, not a code, which asks for obedience. Jesus stands in the way of every selfishness; He leads in the path of every sacrifice; He is crucified in every act of sin; He is glorified in every act of holiness. St. Stephen, as he suffered for the Gospel, saw the heavens open and Jesus standing to receive him. St. Peter, fleeing in a second panic from Rome, meets Jesus returning to be crucified in his place. Conscience and heart are settled on Jesus, and one feels within one's soul the tides of His virtue. It is not the doctrines or the ethics of Christianity that are its irresistible attraction. Its doctrines have often been a stumbling-block, and its ethics excel only in degree. The life-blood of Christianity is Christ.[2]

II.

Our Sufficiency.

"In him ye are made full."

1. *Apart from Christ we are empty, incomplete.*—All men are in themselves imperfect, incomplete, mere fragments as human beings and moral creatures.

[1] J. D. Freeman, *Concerning the Christ*, 197.
[2] John Watson, *The Mind of the Master.*

¶ Man's life on earth is incomplete because it contains an explicit contradiction between his conception of what he is and of what he ought to be. His distinctive mark is the possession of an ideal in the light of which he can always condemn his actual condition. The disparity between actual and ideal is never removed on earth, since, however steadily the man advances, his ideal continually recedes before him; and in this he may esteem himself fortunate, since otherwise there would be no more reason for predicating immortality of him than there is for predicating it of the beasts which perish.[1]

¶ Man feels capacities within him that ask an eternity for bloom and fruitage. There is in nature something that sends him in yearning search beyond and above nature.

> That type of perfect in his mind
> In nature can he nowhere find,
> He sows himself on every wind.

In the entire universe, as revealed to man by his senses, there is nothing perfect; and the central impulse in all man's noblest striving is derived from the aspiration of his spirit towards a perfect truth, a perfect beauty, a perfect happiness, which are exemplified nowhere in the world. Art, religion, and the impetuous career of the race towards a higher grade of civilization, depend alike upon the universal imperfection of the material world and the impossibility that a God-related spirit, which man is, should be contented therewith.[2]

> The half moon shows a face of plaintive sweetness
> Ready and poised to wax or wane;
> A fire of pale desire in incompleteness,
> Tending to pleasure or to pain:—
> Lo, while we gaze, she rolleth on in fleetness
> To perfect loss or perfect gain.
>
> Half bitterness we know, we know half sweetness;
> This world is all on wax, on wane:
> When shall completeness round time's incompleteness,
> Fulfilling joy, fulfilling pain?
> Lo, while we ask, life rolleth on in fleetness
> To finished loss or finished gain.[3]

[1] A. C. Pigou, *Browning as a Religious Teacher*, 56.
[2] P. Bayne, *Lessons from my Masters*, 284.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 198.

2. *Christ's fulness is sufficient for us.*—"In him *ye* are made full." He is our reservoir; He is our well-spring; He is our infinite resource. It is a gracious, beautiful, heartening word, this word "fulness." It is as though our life were all gaps, defects, deficiencies, and the gaps in the shore of human need were as many as human kind, and of multiplex variety, and our Lord were an ocean of tidal fulness flowing up in all His fulness to the shore of human need, till every bay and cove and cranny and crevice is filled. Every man's gap is filled in Jesus. Wherever there is a crevice or a chink, or a bay in human need, the Lord fills it. Everybody finds his peace in Jesus.

He enters the soul to fill out every lack, and every secret fault, knowing it all through with a most subtle and perfect knowledge. He communicates, inbreathes, sheds abroad Himself, configuring it inwardly to all that is most perfect in Himself. He does it by a working in the nature of inspiration, not putting the will on forming this or that particular trait for itself, but by flooding and floating it on towards this or that, by His own Divine motion, turning its very liberty towards all it wants and needs to receive. These inspirations are to be currents running exactly where it requires to be carried, and it is just as if every ship in the sea were to have a Gulf Stream given specially to it, running the exact course of its voyage, and drifting it on to its port. The inspirations are all perfect, they are adequate, exact and steady, so that no completest issue may be missed.

¶ For fifteen years it has been my glory to proclaim it with increasing conviction and with a deepening and growing experience. I have never yet in all my life found a single spiritual need that I could not find redressed and filled in Christ. I don't wonder that Hugh Price Hughes said to his wife, "Put on my grave-stone, 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want.'"[1]

¶ On New Year's Day 1905 came the sudden death of Henry Thompson, vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford, and sometime Warden of Radley. He and the Bishop had been brothers-in-law since 1877. To his sister, the Bishop thus wrote from Mortehoe, on January 2: "He is spared suffering, and weariness, and old age; and you, in your great love for him, will think much of this, that he is spared the trial of loneliness; and though it falls on you, you will bear it as for him, since one or other must have borne it. And through

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Weekly*, April 6, 1911, p. 4.

it all you will thank God, not only for those hidden purposes of mercy of which our knowledge of His love may make us sure in all things:—but also for those clear fruits of His bounty which cannot ever be missed or forgotten: for the character, the heart, the goodness that His grace wrought in Henry:—for the wonderful happiness of so many years:—for the helpfulness and dutifulness and promise of all your sons. And as you thank God for all these blessings,—and even when your heart fails,—He will help you in your trial and sorrow and weariness—I am very unworthy to speak at all of His help—but indeed I am very sure of its sufficiency: there is nothing lacking, on His side.[1]

¶ What mortal mind can apprehend the sufficiency of the outgoings of the eternal? Who understands the sufficiency of the sea? Who knows its multitudinous life? How vast and wonderful it is! Who knows the richness of the earth, the mother and nurse of all the seeds, the parent and cradle of all growths? Have you never been astonished at the wonderful richness of the earth? How, year after year, without failure, she yields through her bosom the wonderful growths that delight the world and that feed the world. Who knows the sufficiency of the orbs that make the day and that braid their glory into the robes of night? Who knows the overflowing of the clouds, the springs that never fail, the streams that never run dry, the rivers that flow on in their majestic current century after century, millennium after millennium, carrying forward without cessation or break their mighty tide? Yet these are only a few among the creatures of God, and the creatures that we can apprehend with our capacity. If this, then, be true of these creatures of God, what must we say of the Maker of them all?[2]

¶ Just as a river that runs in a full clear current through the heart of a city yields an unfailing supply of water to each of its dwellings, and fills a vessel which a child may dip into its stream, because it gushes from its rocky cleft high up near the mountain peak where the rain-clouds gather and drip, or the perpetual snows distil their ice-cold dews into its basin; so in like manner the grace that is in Christ, the fulness of the Godhead, flows into and fills up all the emptiness of the human soul. Man till he has come to God is an infinite want—Christ is an infinite resource and fulfilment for that want. Man is fallen—Christ lifts him up; he is fettered—Christ sets him free; he is guilty—Christ is righteousness; he is ignorant—Christ is wisdom; he is powerless—Christ is strength. And after he has come to God, his earthly

[1] *Francis Paget, Bishop of Oxford*, 220. [2] D. D. McLaurin.

life is full of yearning and striving, of lofty reach and heavenward endeavour, the powers of an immortal nature unfolding within him and seeking their true sphere of exercise, its affections climbing upwards and seeking their true centre of rest. For all upward longings and pure aspirations there is satisfaction in Christ. In him all noble powers find full employment, all holy affections complete repose. Man's weak, imperfect, sinful nature, conscious of its fall and seeking to rise to God again, finds in Christ all needful resources for raising it up and guiding it onwards to holiness and glory. In the second Adam the whole family of the redeemed stand faultless before God, perfect and entire, wanting nothing. They are "complete in Him."[1]

He bore the sin!
Alone He bore the load;
For us He drank the cup,—
Jesus, the Son of God.
He bore the sin!

He paid the debt!
He paid it with His blood;
Each claim He satisfied,—
All that we owe to God.
He paid the debt!

He made the peace!
He silences each fear;
He is Himself the peace,
By blood He brings us near.
He made the peace!

He did the work!
The law He magnified;
Our lifetime's failure He
Hath gloriously supplied.
He did the work!

The foe He fought!
Our foe and His He slew;
He leads us in the war,
Almighty to subdue.
The foe He fought!

[1] J. Hamilton *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. James D. Burns, M.A.*, 363.

He won the life!
Life by His death He won;
That life He giveth us,
The glory and the crown.
He won the life![1]

(1) We are made full in Him as the Revealer of Divine truth. This is one aspect of the fulness upon which the sacred writer dwells. The Church at Colossæ was in danger from heretical teaching, and their refuge from that danger was in the fulness of Christ. Their reply to all the wild speculations of the mysticism around them was found here. "We are complete in him." "In him are all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge* hidden." "This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech." He exhorted them to "take heed lest any one should make spoil of them through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness."

¶ Ancient mariners sailed by the light of the stars; from the stormy bosom of the ocean they looked to the distant heavens for direction; while the firmament was clear they were safe, but when clouds intervened dangers beset their path. So, taking the words of the Lord Jesus for your guidance, you shall cross the sea of life in safety and reach the heavenly shore; but if you allow human philosophy, science, or tradition, if you permit priesthoods, ceremonies, or sacraments to come between your mind and the light of His teaching, your course must be perilous, and your progress uncertain, for He, and He only, is "the way, the truth, and the life."[2]

(2) The chasm between man and God has been bridged over in Him. If we descend at times to the darkest depths, He anticipates us there; He weighs every sigh; He interprets every tear; He helps every desire Godward in its upward flight—and if in our more jubilant and ecstatic moments we cherish bright visions of future bliss and glory, He still anticipates us there, saying, "Come up hither." The ladder of mediation is complete; there are no gaps left. Every rung is there in our ascent to God. The veil of the Temple has been rent in twain; the way to the Holiest is opened wide for the

[1] Horatius Bonar. [2] T. Jones, *The Divine Order*, 30.

mitred dignitary and for the most obscure of Christ's brethren as well. And in our approach to God we are made full in Him.

¶ Pilate, when he set Christ before the crowd which surrounded his palace on that dread day, cried out *Ecce Homo*, Behold the man! This might be echoed round all the world—"Behold the Man!—the true Man, the One we should ever aim to be like, and whose perfection becomes ours by faith in His holy Name." He is the Mediator of the New Covenant that stands between God and man. Faith in Him contains the germ of the new life, and the new love required. It is only a germ—a small thing, it is true—but Christ will make it grow till it becomes like His own. When we live in this spirit we shall come to understand the words of the Apostle, "Ye are complete in him."[1]

(3) We are made full in Him as regards our Christian character. Christianity is not the perfect religion in the sense of being revealed as a finished, rounded, symmetrical whole. It is not perfect in the sense of a closed circle, or a plastic form, which can be altered in nothing without being spoiled. It is not a perfection of proportion, of harmony, of symmetry. That is the Greek, pagan idea of perfection; whereas in Christianity we enter the perfect life maimed. The pagan idea of perfection is balance, or harmony of parts with each other. It is self-contained and self-poised. The Christian idea is faith, or harmony of relations with the will of God. It is self-devoted, complete in Him; the perfection not of finish but of faith. It is perfect, not because it presents us with perfection, but because it puts us in a perfect attitude to perfection.

Christian perfection is something which we are put in the perfect way to realize, in the sense that we realize a living, moving ideal of character and life. It is not something with which we are presented; it is not even something we are to believe; but it is something into which we are redeemed. The perfection of Christianity is not even in the ideal of perfection it offers, but in the power of perfection it implants; not in its ideal of a Son of God, but in the power it gives, with the Son of God, to become sons of God by believing in His name.

¶ From every fresh manifestation of our self-incompleteness, we may retreat under cover to this gracious assurance, "Ye are

[1] W. Adamson.

complete in him." We may *sink into Christ* when we cannot rise to Him. And thus we shall be made strong and victorious through apparent defeat, as again and again—

> The steps of Faith
> Fall on the seeming void and find
> The rock beneath.[1]

> Dear Lord, it is better that I
> Should go through the world with one eye,
> If Thou, Light and Guide, be but nigh.
>
> It is better, O Saviour divine,
> To lose this right hand of mine,
> If Thou hold but the other in Thine.
>
> Thou only canst make me complete;
> And to limp by Thy side were more sweet,
> Than walking alone on both feet.[2]

3. We must be in vital connexion with Christ, if we are to be filled with His fulness. The Apostle goes on "and in him ye are made full," which sets forth two things as true in the inward life of Christians, namely, their living incorporation in and union with Christ, and their consequent participation in His fulness. Every one of us may enter into that most real and close union with Jesus Christ by the power of continuous faith in Him. So may we be grafted into the Vine, and builded into the Rock. If thus we keep our hearts in contact with His heart, and let Him lay His lip on our lips, He will breathe into us the breath of His own life, and we shall live because He lives, and in our measure, as He lives. All the fulness of God is in Him, that from Him it may pass into us. We might start back from such bold words if we did not remember that the same Apostle who here tells us that the fulness dwells in Jesus, crowns his wonderful prayer for the Ephesian Christians with that daring petition, "that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." The treasure was lodged in the earthen vessel of Christ's manhood that it might be within our reach. According to our need it will shape itself, being to each what the moment most requires—wisdom, or strength, or beauty, or courage, or patience. Out of it will come

[1] A. J. Gordon, *In Christ*, 118. [2] J. A. Torrey.

whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, as Rabbinical legends tell us that the manna tasted to each man like the food he wished for most.

¶ An aspiration is a joy for ever, a possession as solid as a landed estate, a fortune which we can never exhaust, and which gives us year by year a revenue of pleasurable activity. To have many of these is to be spiritually rich.[1]

Oh, Bearer of the key
That shuts and opens with a sound so sweet
Its turning in the wards is melody,
All things we move among are incomplete
And vain until we fashion them in Thee![2]

¶ What religion desires is not a truncated piece of a man, but a whole man, healthy, happy, natural, and free. Religion is not a January thaw of sentimentalism, but a clear, vigorous, frosty morning, which stirs one's energy and steadies one's nerves. Religion means not less life but more life, not subtraction of power but multiplication of power, not emptiness but fulness. I remember hearing it said of Phillips Brooks that he seldom preached a sermon without using in it the word "richness," and it was certainly a word most characteristic of him. Life to that great prophet was ineffably rich, and to realize and share the richness of experience, to accept the rich privilege of life with a chaste body, an alert mind, a sensitive imagination, and a steady will,—that was but to repeat the great promise of this passage, "Ye are complete in him."[3]

Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the saints and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices
Glad in His coming who hath sworn, I come.

This hath He done, and shall we not adore Him?
This shall He do, and can we still despair?
Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,
Cast at His feet the burthen of our care.

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
Then thro' all life and what is after living
Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *El Dorado*. [2] Dora Greenwell, *The Reconciler*.
[3] F. G. Peabody, *Mornings in the College Chapel*, 2nd Ser., 159.

Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.[1]

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul.*

Risen with Christ.

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Risen with Christ.

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.—Col. iii. 1.

1 There are three aspects in which the New Testament treats the resurrection, and these three seem to have come successively into the consciousness of the Church. First, as is natural, it was considered mainly in its bearing on the person and work of our Lord. We may take for illustration the way in which the resurrection is treated in the earliest of the apostolic discourses, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Then it came, with further reflection and experience, to be discerned that it had a bearing on the hope of the immortality of man. And last of all, as the Christian life deepened, it came to be seen that the resurrection was the pattern of the life of the Christian disciples. It was regarded first as a witness, next as a prophecy, then as a symbol. Three fragments of Scripture express these three phrases: for the first, "Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead"; for the second, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept"; for the third, "God raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places."

2. The resurrection of our Lord secured His ascension to the right hand of God and His eternal session on the equal throne of Deity. As "the power of his resurrection" is applied to the believer, the process of the Saviour's triumph is re-enacted in one who is still encased in the disabilities of this earthly life, and is constantly and painfully aware of the pertinacity of the law of sin in his members. His life occupies at one time two spheres, that of the flesh and that of the spirit ("The life which I now live *in the flesh* I live *in faith*, the faith which is in the Son of

God"). Through the spirit there is conveyed to him without intermission the life of the ascended and glorified Lord; the flesh still solicits to sin. The two spheres must be brought into one: the life in the flesh—trials, sorrows, anxieties, perplexities, infirmities, temptations—must be taken up and placed in the region of spirit. Every desire springing from the flesh that is not itself sinful, every thought which is straitened by the limits that our encompassing mortality imposes, must be lifted into the presence of God, that it may there be disciplined and controlled by the Spirit of Christ who dwells within us.

¶ A great principle animates all the members of the animal kingdom, from the lowest to the highest organism, a principle that prompts them to rise towards the great source of light and heat in order to perfect their structure and improve their functions in the glorious light of the sun. The infusoria of the deep seas ascend from a lower existence in the sunless abyss, they rise into the upper, illuminated waters; give time enough, and they leap on shore, and succeeding species are slowly perfected until the obscure life that originated in the ocean slime mounts the air, exulting in the lark singing at heaven's gate and in the eagle soaring in the sun. Everywhere an instinct stirs in the animal creation, prompting to aspirations in perfecting organisms and their functions. There is also an inherent principle in plants urging them to rise from underground darkness into the regions of light, from the gloomy cave into the bright realms of day, from the shady forest high up into the radiant sky.[1]

> Every clod hath a stir of might,
> An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
> And, grasping blindly above it for light,
> Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers.

I.

A Possession.

1. *The possession is life through Christ's resurrection.*—When Christ rose from the dead, He raised His people with Him into a new life. In St. Paul's conception, those who had not accepted Christ were "dead in trespasses and in sins." He looked upon

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Bane and the Antidote*, 95.

the natural state of man as a state of spiritual death; and every step out of that natural condition he regarded as corresponding to something in the life and experience of Jesus Christ. Thus, as Christ died for sin, men were exhorted to die unto sin: to be "buried with him in baptism." They were asked to crucify their flesh, as He was crucified. Then, after the crucifixion of the flesh—after the burial of the old man in baptism—they were said to "put on the new man" and to "walk in newness of life," after the pattern of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The man who had thus died to his old life was made alive with a new life. The highest and best faculties, the spiritual faculties, which were lying, as it were, shrouded in the tomb, were called into new life and activity. And thus men were said to be risen with Christ. For himself, St. Paul says, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

¶ The spiritual facts in a man's experience, which are represented by these two great symbols of a death and a rising, are like the segment of a circle which, seen from the one side, is convex, and from the other, is concave. But however loosely we may feel that the metaphors represent the facts, this is plain, that unless a man dies to flesh, to self-will, to the world, he never will live a life that is worth calling life. The condition of all nobleness and all growth upwards is that we shall die daily, and live a life that has sprung victorious from the death of self. All lofty ethics teach that, and Christianity teaches it, with redoubled emphasis, because it says to us, that the Cross and the resurrection are not merely imaginative emblems of the noble and the Christian life, but are a great deal more than that. For by faith in Jesus Christ we are brought into such a true deep union with Him that, in no mere metaphorical or analogous sense, but in most blessed reality, there comes into the believing heart a spark of the life that is Christ's own, so that with Him we do live, and from Him we do live a life cognate with His, who, having risen from the dead, dieth no more, and over whom death hath no dominion.[1]

2. *Resurrection with Christ is a present experience.*—There is a triumph over death for which we do not need to wait until the graves are opened. We may have it at once. There is a victory

[1] A. Maclaren, *After the Resurrection*, 133.

of life for which we do not need to look to some far-distant morning. We may feel it to-day. St. Paul felt it as he sat in his Roman prison, writing to his friends at Colossæ. Worn, and feeble, and aged before his time, bound with chains, waiting for his trial before a cruel and bloody Cæsar, St. Paul knew even then that he was a risen man. By faith in the things that are unseen and eternal he had already won the victory over the world. In prison he was free, in weakness he was strong, in chains he was cheerful, in exile he was exultant, in trouble he triumphed, and in the drear winter of old age his spirit was quickened with an immortal spring. Surely this is a veritable resurrection, and they who have entered into such an experience are risen indeed.

The higher Christian life, rightly conceived, not only does not separate itself from the present, or make the saving of the soul something distinct and apart from doing good now, but it finds its development in well-doing. It takes up into itself every aspect of our present existence—personal, social, even political—and throws around all its own hallowing lustre. It raises our whole life by rooting it in God; and so far from discrediting or belittling any real interest of humanity, it really magnifies and exalts every such interest. It implies the cultivation of every noble quality and high affection of our nature; the amelioration of human society; the development of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." It embraces whatever tends to exalt or idealize man—to make him more of a true hero—courageous, temperate, and self-restrained in the hour of danger, as well as whatever makes him meek and lowly of heart; the zeal that may work for God and the bravery that may die for Him; as well as the purity that can alone see God. The Christian ideal is no one-sided development of our manifold nature; still less is it any mere longing after a heavenly Jerusalem with milk and honey blessed. Such pictures have their use. There is good in a vivid realization of the heavenly state if God grant us such a blessing. But there is a higher good in rightly setting the affections on things above—in the culture, that is to say, of all good within us, the achievement of every real virtue, the

beautifying and ennobling of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.

For resurrection living
There is resurrection power,
And the praise and prayer of trusting
May glorify each hour.
For common days are holy,
And years an Eastertide,
To those who with the living Lord
In living faith abide.

3. *Death to sin precedes resurrection.*—We die to sin when we sink ourselves into the death of our Lord. We identify ourselves with Him, receiving into our own life (in the contact of faith and of the Spirit) all the triumphant energies of a love, a compassion, an endurance, a meekness, a lowliness, a truthfulness, a fidelity, a righteousness, which rose to meet the last and loftiest demands of the Divine holiness. We withdraw the controlling force of our nature (let us call it our personality) from those sinful affections which reside in the flesh, and centre it on those which have been introduced into our life through union with Christ.

¶ It seems to me that the Bible teaches us that such truths as that of the death to sin are by no means to be considered as true only under conditions and limitations, only by a tacit suppression of existing facts; nay, that such truths express just the most absolutely true and fundamental facts, and that any other facts which are apparently at variance with them are themselves only conditionally and secondarily true.

St. Paul acknowledges the deflexion of men's acts from the state in which he believes them actually as a matter of fact to stand, just as much as any modern religionist could do; but he does not make the deflexion itself to be the true characteristic of men. He says, "You are in a right and true state, I beseech you to walk accordingly." This is his standard formula. He refers men's irregular acts to their walk, not to what they are. There is, of course, a question behind, on which language must needs be contradictory—In virtue of what are men dead to sin? and further, Who then are dead to sin?

The first question is of course answered by St. Paul—in virtue of Christ's death on the cross. But, though this really contains the answer to the second question, it is not usually understood to do so. The answer must be, All who bear the same flesh and

blood which Christ bore. It is therefore strictly true that every Jew, heathen, or outcast from the true fold of any kind is, in St. Paul's words, already "dead to sin." But it is not the less needful that this eternal and invisible truth should have a temporal and outward embodiment and attestation; and that can be only by baptism. Therefore St. Paul connects the state with a past completed act, by which it was formally taken possession of. The outward temporal act of passing from the world into the Church was the true symbol of the transition (if so it may be called) from "nature" to "grace," from the life of sin and death of man (Rom. vii. 9, 10) to the death to sin and life of man, which in reality does not belong to time at all, at least only in so far as evil and sin themselves are only temporal.[1]

¶ As Christ died, so must we die. Wilberforce died to fashion that he might live unto humanity; Ruskin died to gold that he might live to beauty; Darwin died to society that he might live to science; and every man's higher life begins in a death.[2]

¶ A beautiful treatise has come to us out of the Middle Ages. It is entitled "The Craft of Dying." Its aim is so to fortify the child of God, as he addresses himself to go down into the "ghostly battle" that marks the end of his militant course, that he may "die well." We need a similar treatise to teach us how to die with Christ. "Ye *have* died with him," says the Apostle, therefore "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."[3]

Touch the rock-door of my heart,
Christ, dead for my sin!
Say, "Come—let us rise, and depart
From the shadows within—

Out where the light of the stars
Shines clear overhead,
Where the soul is free from its bars,
And Sin lies dead."

And dead the old Shadow lies,
That has chilled my breast;
Say to the sleepers, "Arise!"
Lead them to rest!

[1] F. J. A. Hort, *Life and Letters*, i. 407.
[2] W. L. Watkinson, *The Bane and the Antidote*, 111.
[3] D. M. McIntyre, *Life in His Name*, 176.

(1) The Apostle seems to have had in his mind the sacrament of *Baptism*, which was viewed as symbolic of the death and rising again of Christ, and of the Christian in mystical union with Him. The convert went solemnly down into the font, and this was expressive of his spiritual burial; then after immersing his head three times, he ascended out of the font, and this was expressive of his new and spiritual life in Christ. In the previous chapter we read, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

(2) But there was another sense in which men were said to be "risen with Christ." When He came forth from the tomb, it was not as a single instance of Divine power over life and death; it was to show the purpose of God in respect to all mankind. He came forth from the grave to prove that there was *immortality for all God's children.* The bursting open of His tomb was a prophecy of the opening of every grave, and of the resurrection of all flesh. To St. Paul, Christ crucified was the great sacrifice for sin, but Christ risen was the pledge of the glorious destiny of every believer in Him. Men rose with Him in faith, in hope, and in assurance, to the heavenly mansions of the Father's house.

Our Lord's resurrection from the grave is no greater miracle than His being man, and yet absolutely sinless. His power over sin and His power over death are, like the heat and light of the sun, two radiations of the self-same energy—either of them containing evidence of the presence of the other, either of them justifying His own claim to be the very God, the central source alike of holiness and of immortality. And because He is divinely, creatively holy and immortal, He can and will make His people holy and immortal too. But while in Him the two attributes are in reality but one, in us the creatures of time there lies a lifelong day between them. First we hear His voice saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and afterwards "Arise and walk." Once to have heard the first voice is a pledge that we shall hear the second. For once to have felt within us the victory over sin is a proof—an infinitely stronger proof than any philosophic speculation ever gave—that we already possess the quickening, immortalizing Spirit that will not suffer His holy ones to see corruption. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in

you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is this confidence that makes St. Paul view our two resurrections so closely together that he speaks of them in places as virtually one, and addresses Christians as already risen *with* Christ, that is, not *like* Christ, but in, and through, and by, the actual presence of Christ within them.

¶ In an address which he gave at the West London Mission, he said, "I hope I shall not soon forget the resurrection sweetness that I instantly knew when I felt that I had really died to self. It seemed so proper a foretaste of the passage into the world which is to come . . . *How wonderfully small a thing death may be; not a river*, but a rill, scarce ankle-deep, across which we may step into the Glory-land beyond."[1]

What lies beyond?
I have but little care—
Since Christ is there—
Himself the deathless bond,
For ever binding me
Unto the Home where I would be—
Himself its temple, and its light,
Of more than noonday radiance bright—
Himself the Rest where I would dwell—
The Haven where my anchor soon shall fall—
Himself my All in all.
I cannot tell
Of glory that awaits
Within the gates:
A little while I walk with vision dim,
But O, I know that He is there,
All-glorious, All-fair,
And I shall be with Him.[2]

II.

A Prize.

1. The prize is "the things that are above." When St. Paul speaks of the things above, and the things below, he is not

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Life of F. W. Crossley*, 212.
[2] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 15.

setting in contrast the abode of the blessed and our present dwelling-place. The contrast is rather between the good and the evil, the fleshly and the spiritual, Christ's way of looking at things, and the ordinary earthly way. There is a way of measuring and estimating things as if we were merely human; not only so, but as if we were just educated animals with bodily affections and feelings, short-lived and perishable, like all the material things around us. And there is another way of surveying and judging them, which is the way of elevated, immortal, and spiritual creatures, creatures who are akin to Christ, and look with Christ's eyes. And this higher way is what we are to aspire to. Christ has enthroned certain qualities with Himself at the right hand of God—certain qualities and thoughts, ways of thinking, and ways of judging. He has exalted them with Himself. He has made them supremely beautiful. They are the Divine, all-attractive, all-victorious things, and we are to prize them above all things and to set our affections on them. Think of all things as Christ thinks of them, judge and weigh all things as Christ judges them. Read His meaning into all things. You are risen with Him; let your thoughts and affections move on His high level.

O glorious Head, Thou livest now!
Let us Thy members share Thy life;
Canst Thou behold their need, nor bow
To raise Thy children from the strife
With self and sin, with death and dark distress,
That they may live to Thee in holiness?

Earth knows Thee not, but evermore
Thou liv'st in Paradise, in peace;
Oh fain my soul would thither soar,
Oh let me from the creatures cease:
Dead to the world, but to Thy Spirit known,
I live to Thee, O Prince of life, alone.

Break through my bonds whate'er it cost,
What is not Thine within me slay,
Give me the lot I covet most,
To rise as Thou hast risen to-day.
I nought can do, a slave to death I pine,
Work Thou in me, O Power and Life Divine!

Work Thou in me, and heavenward guide
My thoughts and wishes, that my heart
Waver no more nor turn aside,
But fix for ever where Thou art.
Thou art not far from us; who loves Thee well,
While yet on earth in heaven with Thee may dwell.[1]

2. Where is it that Christ sitteth on the right hand of God? Surely not in some distant region, invisible and inaccessible to mortals. To read the law of the risen life thus would be to rob it of its meaning and its power for the present moment. God is not secluded in some far-off heaven. He is dwelling and working in this very world where we live. His "right hand" is manifest in all His works of wisdom and righteousness and goodness and love. Christ sitteth on the right hand of His Father because He is exalted to share in all these glorious works, because He is the Mediator between the Divine and the human, because His spirit brings men into harmony with God and inspires the pure and holy thoughts, the just and noble deeds, the generous and blessed affections that lift the world. He is not far away from us. He is with us always, even unto the end of the world. He sitteth close beside us, breaks bread at our tables, walks with us in the city streets and among the green fields and beside the sea. The "things that are above" are the things that belong to Him and to His Kingdom, the spiritual realities of a noble life, whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report. These are the things that we are to seek.

¶ There is a kind of life, that of the mole or of the worm, which burrows in the dark; another life, like the reptile's which crawls. The life in the eagle makes it soar up to gaze at the sun. Put the eagle-life into the mole, and it would seek to rise. Put the mole-life into the eagle, and it would seek to burrow. By nature we have the mole and reptile life which burrows in the dark or crawls on the earth's surface. God gives us through Christ the resurrection life which looks up, and its very nature leads us to "seek the things above."[2]

3. Let us practise the upward look: it brings heaven nearer. We stand on some height just before sunrise, gazing upon a dull, opaque mass of cloud and vapour, chilly and sad, till, presently,

[1] Tersteegen. [2] A. C. Dixon.

a broad band of gold appears on the horizon, broadens, changes into a ruddier glow, and the sun himself appears, and diffuses an unutterable glory over the whole scene. So there are times when the outlook on this life, with all its dulness under the show of activity, all its falsehood beneath the mask of a thousand hypocrisies, depresses, disgusts, saddens and chills us to the very heart. And the saddest of all is that we feel ourselves to be a part of this melancholy system, and as mundane as all the rest. And then it is that those magnificent inspirations and revelations of the Gospel burst upon us, and we feel that behind these life-long disguises, often so hideous, always so perplexing, something glorious is concealed.

¶ A year or two ago, after the Lord's Day service, I was standing before the house of a friend with whom I was staying, and looking abroad upon one of the fairest scenes in Scotland. At the horizon's edge there was a great cincture of hills; the middle distance was filled with woods and fields yellowing into gold; and just at our feet, at the bottom of a little hill, there was a town, with the smoke sunfilled rising into the windless heavens. An expression of unlimited admiration escaped me; but a friend who stood by said: "Yes, it is beautiful, but it is too circumscribed; there is no outlook on the world beyond. It does not lie in a wide horizon."

If you were to ask me to describe in a sentence the difference between a Christian and another man, picking out the best natural man you know, the finest specimen you can, and putting him over against the Christian man, the grand difference is this: the Christian has an infinite horizon, and that infinite horizon dominates the whole situation.[1]

¶ During the fifteenth year of the ministry of Horace Bushnell he had a marvellous revelation, enabling him spiritually to discern spiritual things. On an early morning of February (1848) his wife awoke to hear that the light they had waited for had risen indeed. She asked, "What have you seen?" He replied "*The Gospel*!" It had come to him, not as something reasoned out, but as an inspiration—a revelation from the mind of God Himself. This new and glorious conception of Jesus Christ lifted Bushnell into a higher life, gave him new insight and power, and shaped all the remaining years of his quickening and extraordinary ministry. His voice, like the lark's, sang at heaven's gate.[2]

[1] John Smith, in *The Keswick Week*, 1899, p. 156. [2] T. L. Cuyler.

4. The vision of the ideal influences and controls our daily life. In morals every man is subject to the highest he knows. The standard is that which is absolute and ideal, according to the measure of a man's knowledge and feeling. The only things worthy of man's seeking are "with Christ at the right hand of God." The unrest which destroys men's lives and the sense of dissatisfaction with themselves arise from their aim being below their conscious standard of conduct. And it is here that the practical value of fellowship with Christ is clearly seen. Through the life which men thus obtain, they are helped to do what they see and acknowledge to be right. And in nothing is this more apparent than in men's efforts at moral reformation. It is a great matter that men desire to reform themselves. But when they enter upon their task they speedily discover how true are the words of Christ, "Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." One of the penalties of sin is impaired will-power. What men most need in such cases is an accession of spiritual energy. It is new life they want, and this new life they receive who are risen with Christ: and in its power they are able to free themselves from the accursed fetters of old sins, and to find a new desire for higher things, a new joy in seeking them.

¶ This natural world is part of a grand universal system; its vital forces stream in from wider regions, its tides and seasons are governed from above; so man is the subject of a vast spiritual kingdom, whose influences penetrate, whose laws determine, all his mundane and physical interests. To seek other things in preference to that kingdom and its righteousness is to subvert the rational order, to subordinate the higher to the lower, the principal to the secondary; it is to take the surest way to failure even in our secular pursuits, which lose their vitalizing elements and true savour so soon as they are cut off from the springs of spiritual motive and experience.[1]

¶ As the culminating point of a mountain-chain bears on the lower hills that for miles and miles buttress it, and hold it up, and aspire towards it, and find their perfection in its calm summit that touches the skies; so the more we have in view, as our aim in life, Christ who is "at the right hand of God," and assimilation, communion with Him, approbation from Him, the more will all immediate aims be ennobled, and delivered from the evils that else cleave to them. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," and all

[1] G. G. Findlay, *The Things Above*, 11.

your other aims—as students, as thinkers, as scientists, as men of business, as parents, as lovers, or anything else—will be granted by being subordinated to the conscious aim of pleasing Him. That aim should persist, like a strain of melody, one long, holden-down, diapason note, through all our lives. Perfume can be diffused into the air, and dislodge no atom of that which it makes fragrant. This supreme aim can be pursued through, and by means of, all nearer ones, and is inconsistent with nothing but sin.[1]

III.

A Pursuit.

1. "Seek," says the Apostle—"seek the things that are above." That is the pursuit. It is an image based on our moral nature, local elevation being the instinctive symbol of spiritual aspiration and refinement. They were to seek above what they had once sought below—above the level of the ordinary pagan desire and aim; higher things than money, place, selfish gratification, or any material and secular good, and distinctively those things for which Christ had been distinguished, and which prevailed at their best and brightest, which ruled, and were everything in that upper realm to which He had passed—truth, righteousness, purity, and noble love.

The real aim of the Christian is an upward one. "Things that are above" are of supreme consequence to him, and the setting of his affection on them determines the fashion of his whole life among men. His spiritual conceptions and aspirations are expressed in the ordinary activities of his life before others, and he makes all its necessary duties but stepping-stones to the realization of the higher realities. Indeed, the direction of all our external doings is in the nature of things determined and controlled by the power of our inner life. Hence to realize that we are "risen with Christ" lends to all life a sanctifying force which manifests itself in every sphere and realm.

¶ Apart from all revelation, we find in ourselves instincts seeking upward, aspirations towards things higher than those of time and sense; we look beyond the physical life; we conceive ideas and hopes touching the unseen and the eternal. However

[1] A. Maclaren, *After the Resurrection*, 138.

it may be explained, we persist in dreaming great dreams, we aspire to higher spheres, we seek to realize ourselves in an upper universe—we impatiently long for a sky in which to spread our wings as royal birds do, we reach yearningly towards a central light in which our being may glow and blossom like the flowers. Much about human nature and life seems poor and disappointing, but this impetus and this passion for the transcendent shed a wonderfully redeeming light on our apparent mortality and meaness.[1]

¶ "Risen with him." Seated with Him! Then our outlook in life is not an upward, but a downward one! Here is the demand for Christian imagination. How does life look from Heaven? Think of our discontent in lowly places, our feverish longing for great work, our love of tinsel, our chafing under discipline, our hard judgments, our cherished grievances. How would they appear to us, seen from above? How do they look to Jesus? Put yourself in your true place, and judge accordingly. Our citizenship is in Heaven; let our conversation be heavenly.[2]

¶ I have done little more than desire the good thing, and seek to know nothing about the mysteries of our being, but I like to think that even unuttered aspirations may have a material force.[3]

2. The very fact of being raised with Christ is an inspiration and incitement to reach up to higher levels of attainment. "Seek things above," says St. Paul, "because of what has been granted you, not that you may *have* something granted to you." There is nothing more to be procured; the utmost is yours in the ascension of Christ, for you are risen with Him; therefore give yourselves to excel. Virtue was the end—the end for which they were dignified with immortality. They were summoned to reach after it on the ground of their investiture. The inducement presented is the claim of high position, the responsibility of rich possession. It was as though the writer had said, "Remember your rank and standing, and act in accordance with it; labour to be worthy of it."

¶ There is in a little churchyard in Switzerland a simple inscription on the tomb of one who perished in an Alpine accident,

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Bane and the Antidote*, 96.
[2] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 28.
[3] *George Frederic Watts*, i. 312.

which has always appealed to me with singular force: "He died climbing." He had heard the call of the mountains and lost his life in endeavouring to respond. We have heard the call of the risen Christ, but unlike the climber, we gain our lives in our sustained attempt to respond worthily. "Seek those things that are above" is a call to enjoy the largest possible life, for the very struggle develops latent possibilities and capacities, and each step upward is into fuller liberty and more perfect manhood.[1]

Higher still, and higher!
O to leave the clouds below,
And the creeping mists that throw
Doubt on all the way we go
As we would aspire
Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
Ah! how little way I make,
Plunging where the black bogs quake,
Slowly hewing through the brake
Tangled with old briar!—
Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
Courage! look not down to see
How high thy footing now may be,
Upward set thy face where He
Calls thee to come nigher,
Higher still, and higher.

Higher still, and higher!
Lo! the sun is sinking fast,
And lengthening shades are round thee cast,
Let not thy heart fail at the last;
'Tis no time to tire—
Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
Sweet the air is, pure and clear,
And thy Lord is ever near
Yonder where the songs I hear
And the golden lyre—
Higher still, and higher.

[1] J. Stuart Holden, *Redeeming Vision*, 53.

Higher still, and higher!
What, if Death be standing right
In thy way, and dreadful night?
All beyond is life and light,
And thy soul's desire—
Higher still, and higher![1]

3. To seek the things which are above is to show that our life is really hid with Christ in God. Little or nothing may be said; a look or whisper is often enough. Sometimes the change may be marked by self-restraint, by the absence of chatter about self and our petty likes and dislikes. Or it may be expressed in acts of self-denial which involve delicate consideration for the feelings as well as the tastes of others—that "sweet and innocent compliance which is the great cement of love." Sometimes it may be seen in a quiet silent prayer in the bedroom a little longer than usual, a determination to have a few minutes in church before or after service, a posture of unaffected reverence, or a hushed tone in using Scripture words and in saying the name of God—all these are often eloquent signs.

¶ The best motto is not an inscription for your tombstone: "*Resurgam*, I shall arise, when earthly life is over, when the graves unclose." It is a watchword for your hearts: "*Resurgo*, I arise, I am delivered, I am quickened, I begin to live upward, through Christ, for Christ, unto Christ."[2]

¶ Myers said in most deliberate words that his own history had been that of a soul struggling into the conviction of its own existence, and that he had postponed all else to the one question whether life and love survive the tomb. To give and to receive joy, companionship with nobler spirits—these seemed to him the real aims of life; and while doubt remained as to the permanence of the human soul, even these aims appeared to be futile and fruitless. But when the conviction of immortality dawned upon him, as it did, he said that it gave him a creed which encouraged him to live at his best, and inspired the very strongest hopes that can incite to exertion.[3]

¶ In the best pictures of great masters, *tone* is almost everything. Form goes for much. Form, indeed, and the steadiness of the drawing, go for very much in the "composition" of the

[1] Walter C. Smith, *Thoughts and Fancies for Sunday Evenings*, 104.
[2] H. van Dyke, *The Open Door*, 39.
[3] A. C. Benson, *Leaves of the Tree*, 171.

picture; but deprive it of the wonderful *non so che* called *tone*, and it stands out hard and unpleasing, and supplies to the soul no real pleasure. On the other hand, let the *tone* of the true artist be there, and how it covers in a great degree even badness in the drawing. In the same way, in nature, atmosphere counts for much, very much, in the charm of a scene, in its power, that is, to touch the heart; and when you come to personal life, what *tone* is to the picture, what *atmosphere* is to the landscape, such is general temper to the human character. Now the power and beauty of "the things which are above," and the consequent necessity and blessedness of seeking them—all this is placed in evidence by the altered temper of the life in an *advancing* Christian.[1]

Lord, grant us wills to trust Thee with such aim
Of hope and passionate craving of desire
That we may mount aspiring, and aspire
Still while we mount; rejoicing in Thy Name,
Yesterday, this day, day by day the Same:
So sparks fly upward scaling heaven by fire,
Still mount and still attain not, yet draw nigher,
While they have being, to their fountain flame.
To saints who mount, the bottomless abyss
Is as mere nothing, they have set their face
Onward and upward toward that blessèd place
Where man rejoices with his God, and soul
With soul, in the unutterable kiss
Of peace for every victor at the goal.[2]

[1] W. J. Knox Little, *Characteristics and Motives of the Christian Life*, 33.
[2] Christina G. Rossetti, *Out of the Deep*, 9.

The Hidden Life.

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The Hidden Life.

Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.—Col. iii. 2–4.

1. The mind of St. Paul moves in this Epistle on a very high level. He is speaking to the men of Colossæ of one who, in the estimate of unbelievers, was no more than a dead man. Whatever Christ had been, He is gone; and the new truth St. Paul is introducing to the consciousness of the world notwithstanding, is that there has been no severance between the life of Him who has gone and that of men now living on the earth. He is not like any other dead man; He is One who rose from the dead, and though He has since disappeared from sight, His resurrection is that characteristic thing which makes Him different from all other men who have lived and died. It is not only a physical but a moral resurrection; the coming to life again of all those holy principles of action and elements of power which seemed for a moment to have been overshadowed by the darkness of the grave. He is now not dead but unchangeably living. And together with this the Apostle insists on the indissoluble character of the common life between Christ and His disciples. That which has gone out of sight is the mere form and semblance of the Man Christ Jesus; the true Christ is risen and ascended. And if there be this indissoluble union, men now living on the earth have risen with Him; they are sharers, in a mystic sense which yet is consistent with the deepest reality, in that higher life of His in the heavenly places. To the old life which sought its Paradise on the earth which made this world the sum and substance of existence, they have died; they are now sharers with Him in the pure and holy life which has only one supreme ambition, the doing of the

Heavenly Father's Will. "Your life," says the Apostle, "is hid with Christ in God."

2. The fact that St. Paul should have felt justified in writing thus to inhabitants of Colossæ is a remarkable evidence of the power of Christianity to touch hearts and change lives. Colossæ, although no worse than the average contemporary city, can scarcely have been much better; and a few years before, it is tolerably certain, the notion of sending a communication of this kind to people of the place would have been a melancholy sarcasm. But all that had been changed. There were men and women in its streets and lanes now who had believed in Jesus Christ, and who possessed the peace and joy of reconciliation. Risen with Christ, they had the very springs of their being hid with Him in God. Once there had been no depths in their life; all had been shallow, specious, external, busy with affairs that mattered little, crowded with trifles, pathetically wasted in worthless ambition and fleeting pleasure. Then God called them, as He calls us, into a new domain, and their whole experience was re-created. In the barren wastes fountains of water were springing up; in wide ranges of unprofitable folly mines had been discovered that would yield the gold and gems of faith and hope and love. Once they were content with a poor, starveling, fortuitous morality; always untrustworthy, always unequal to a new or sudden strain, whereas now their stores of power and gladness in service were held high above the reach of sorrow and temptation, because treasured and guarded well by Christ in the unseen.

3. There are here two similar exhortations, side by side. "Seek the things that are above," and "Set your mind on the things that are above." The first is *preceded* and the second is *followed* by its reason. So the two laws of conduct are, as it were, enclosed like a kernel in its shell, or a jewel in a gold setting, by encompassing motives. These considerations in which the commandments are embedded are the double thought of union with Christ in His resurrection and in His death, and, as consequent thereon, participation in His present hidden life and in His future glorious manifestation. So we have here the present budding life of the Christian in union with the risen, hidden Christ; the future consummate flower of the Christian life in

union with the glorious manifested Christ; and the practical aim and direction which alone is consistent with either bud or flower.

¶ Maeterlinck tells us of the threshold of "the third enclosure," behind which is the life of life. Browning, in his "Death in the Desert," expounds the doctrine of the three souls in man which, in ascending order of importance, make up one soul: "What Does, what Knows, what *Is*, three souls, one man." Matthew Arnold has written words about the "Buried Life" which can never be forgotten by those who know them, as he tells of those rare moments when a "bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast, the eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain, and what we mean we say, and what we would, we know." Carlyle, in a well-known passage, declares: "Not what I have, but what I do is my kingdom." That is hardly true. Not what I have is my kingdom; we have learned that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses; not what I know is my kingdom, so soon does knowledge become antiquated and obsolete; not what I say—in words always inadequate and often unreal—is my kingdom; nor even what I do, so little can I accomplish of what I would fain achieve, and my reach so far exceeds my grasp. No; what I *am* is my kingdom; and then the question presses, What am I? We turn from philosophy and poetry to religion, and especially to the Christian religion, and we are reminded of the "inward man," the "hidden man of the heart," and hear the memorable words, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." That life is the one thing that counts for each one of us, and that alone.[1]

¶ It was the passionate and unceasing insistence on the Christ-nature within every man as such that gave dignity and power to the preaching of the early Quakers. Read George Fox's *Journal*, and this emerges out of an astonishing amount of fanaticism and unfairness. It runs like a thread of gold through the whole narrative. On all hands religious men were disputing about the limits of Church membership, the rights of hierarchies, the importance of sacraments, the decrees of God in election and reprobation, and so forth; and there was immense excitement and vehemence and partisanship; Christianity seemed to have lost its moral force altogether; and the Image of Christ had faded from view. Then came this strange, youthful-looking man, with his long hair and brilliant eyes, and courage of a martyr blended with an extraordinary tenderness, and a fervent

[1] W. T. Davison, *The Indwelling Spirit*, 298.

eloquence which held men spell-bound and called them away from the quarrelling Christians and their Churches, and pointed them to Christ within themselves. This is his habitual phrase. "I directed them to the light of Christ *in* them." "I exhorted the family to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and hearken to His teachings in their own hearts." "I directed them to Christ, the true teacher within." These and similar expressions are scattered freely through the journal, and give it a distinct character.[1]

I.

The Old Life Left Behind.

1. "Ye died." That represents a distinct element in Christian experience. It means that the soul passes through a death to earthly things—to sin and the allurements of the flesh, just as the Lord died upon the tree. The crucifixion has its counterpart within us. We die to the attractions of the world.

The new life we enjoy had its birth in the death of the old nature; it is preserved and flourishes now only by the continuous use of that cross on which the old desires were crucified and by which they must still be mortified right on to the very last, when the body itself is put off and earthly temptations cease. The inner life is one of continual joyful self-crucifixion, the doing to death of all that in tendency threatens the supremacy of the higher and better self. The power of the Cross alone can free from the guilt and stain of the past, as in it alone is found the secret of a new, sacred, ineffable life, named in St. John's Gospel "eternal," in one of Paul's Epistles "life indeed."

¶ The old life, like the trees the backwoodsmen cannot wait to cut down, is *ringed*; and, as when that strip of bark is cut out, its withering is only a question of time. Or, to change the figure, the channels in which its streams once flowed may now and then seem to run as copiously as ever; but gradually the parent spring is failing, and one day it will cease, never to fill again. You who have the new heart, but are sorely plagued by the old, remember this. Do not complain that the struggle is unavailing. Do not even grow impatient with yourselves; for not to have surrendered is itself a victory.[2]

[1] Canon H. Hensley Henson.

[2] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 147.

2. Paul is indicating a definite occasion in the past. Sometimes the passage of a soul into God's Kingdom is a very sudden thing. It may even be as the flight of a bird for swiftness. We lie down one night our old selves, and ere we sleep again the revolution has occurred. In this text, however, suddenness of that kind is not necessarily implied. Men may die swiftly, or they may die slowly; it matters nothing, once they have wakened on the immortal side of death.

¶ At the Equator no visible line is stretched round the world for all to see; nevertheless, the line is actually crossed; at some definite point the ship leaves one hemisphere and enters on the other. Just so, when God's eye reads our past, many circumstances may take on a bold prominence and fixity of outline that were concealed, or only half displayed to our feebler gaze. Where we saw nothing but an unbroken, imperceptible advance, He, it is possible, may discern a cleavage, sharp as though effected by a scimitar-stroke, between the old existence and the new. And the fittest metaphor to illustrate the transition that St. Paul can think of is that passage from one world to another which we call *death*.[1]

Yet one more step—no flight
  The weary soul can bear
Into a whiter light,
  Into a hush more rare.

Take me, I am all Thine;
  Thine now, not seeking Thee
Hid in the secret shrine,
  Lost in the shoreless sea.

Grant to the prostrate soul
  Prostration new and sweet;
Make weak the weak, control
  Thy creature; at Thy feet

Passive I lie: shine down,
  Pierce through the will with straight,
Swift beams one after one;
  Divide, disintegrate,

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 146.

Free me from self, resume
Thy place, and be Thou there.
Yet also keep me. Come,
Thou Saviour and Thou slayer![1]

II.

The New Life Hidden in God.

1. Every one has two lives, the outward and the inward; and although they are seemingly separate, having a different mode of manifestation, they are at the same time intimately connected. Even rude, undeveloped natures have that which they hide from men. Much goes on within them that does not show itself outwardly. Their cunning purposes, their selfish greed, their lurid and lustful desires—if not shame, then self-interest and safety lead them to secrete these bad elemental forces; and so the lowest natures have a hidden life of badness. Many men are bad outwardly who are a great deal worse inwardly.

But also when love has purified the soul; when men have risen through the social affections far above these vulgar conditions, they in like manner have secret lives, but of a different sort. Men revolve ten thousand thoughts which never find expression, and never can. We never can say our best things. We think a great deal better than we ever speak. Fancies thick as stars shine in the vault of souls elected to poetry. Our tender and affectionate natures are like nightingales, and will not sing in glare of day, nor without cover and retirement.

Every person of richness of soul will recognize the truth, that the dearest part of his life—that which seems to him the finest, the noblest, the deepest—never is fully and fairly exposed. And if we think a moment, we are conscious that all those subtlest sentiments, those rarest feelings, which, when they manifest themselves in us with power, give us some sentiment of divinity, are the strains of the soul which we cannot speak, and certainly do not. Our feelings towards each other, the feelings that parents have towards their children, are unutterable; and, surely, the feelings of affection which great natures have towards

[1] Edward Dowden.

each other never find expression in words. There is more in one look that the eye gives than in all that the tongue utters in a lifetime.

When the Apostle, therefore, speaks of the Christian life as a hidden one, it is neither a paradox nor a mystery, though at first it may strike one as being so. Interpreted by the analogy of the soul's best habits, it is only declaring the Christian's hope to be the secret and spring of all the rest of his life. That which is the strongest in him, that which is the truest to his Divine nature, that which he considers the best part of him—in short, that which he will call his real life—is hidden. "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

¶ To his sense of responsibility to the Faith and the Church must be added his sense of responsibility as Bishop and Primate for national life. The three things went together; they would stand and fall together. The conviction came to him originally through his reading of Coleridge: "Christianity is not a Theory, or a Speculation; but a Life. Not a Philosophy of Life, but a Life and a living Process." Dr. Temple applied this principle to all doctrines—notably to the doctrine of Easter Day. "Try to live by it," he says to the boys at Rugby: "Try to live as if that other world were immediately before your eyes; try to live as if you were following your great Captain on the road to victory; and, believe me, you will never find the doctrine stale or commonplace or powerless!" This conviction only deepened as he grew older.[1]

¶ As you cross a Highland moor you may come upon a curious bright streak of green, winding in and out among the heather, its pure and shining verdure clearly marked against the dull brown of its immediate surroundings. What is it, and how came it there? Whence rises the sap to feed this soft elastic ribband of turf? There is a tiny stream below, a runnel of sweet water flowing down there out of sight, only hinting its presence by the green beauty above. So the springs of Christian life are hid, hid with Christ in God.[2]

2. The Christian life is hidden inasmuch as here on earth action ever falls short of thought, and the love and faith by which a good man lives can never be fully revealed in his conduct and character. Electricity cannot be carried from the generator to

[1] *Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ii. 670.
[2] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 148.

the point where it is to work without two-thirds of it being lost by the way. Neither word nor deed can adequately set forth a soul; and the profounder and nobler the emotion, the more inadequate are the narrow gates of tongue and hand to give it passage. The deepest love can often only "love and be silent." So, while every man is truly a mystery to his neighbour, a life which is rooted in Christ is more mysterious to the ordinary eye than any other. It is fed by hidden manna. It is replenished from a hidden source. It is guided by other than the world's motives and follows unseen aims. Therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

¶ There is an old and beautiful Spanish legend of a certain Convent of St. Benedict, not far from the old city of Toledo, which was the retreat of a sisterhood embracing some of the noblest blood of all Spain. When the Moors overran the country after Don Roderick and his fine chivalry were slain, they came to this convent and vowed its destruction. But just as they were making their final assault the convent disappeared. Cloisters, cells, chapel, belfry, with their inmates, sank underground. Forty years after a lonely traveller, journeying through the forest at eventide, heard in an open space of rising ground the mysterious echoes of vesper bells and voices floating on the still evening air, as they breathed forth the praise of evensong. Nothing but a moss-grown stone pinnacle surmounted by a Cross broke the dark glades of forest on either hand. Yet the harmonies from that buried convent thrilled his heart with wonder and awe. Ethereal, mystic, heavenly, they broke upon the ear like the echoes of another world. Such is the Christian life ever since the first Easter Day, buried away out of the sight of men, stolen from the grasp of the boasting foe, "hidden in the sealed stone," yet still exerting its powerful spell almost unrecognized over the hearts of men, still breathing forth its heavenly music to souls who have spiritual leisure to hearken to it, still filling the solitary place with mysterious praise.[1]

3. This life is hid, because Christ has gone out of sight, bearing with Him the true source and root of our lives into the secret place of the Most High. Therefore we no longer belong to this visible order of things in the midst of which we tarry for a while. The true spring that feeds our lives lies deep beneath all the surface waters. These may dry up, but it will flow. These

[1] T. A. Gurney, *The Living Lord and the Opened Grave*, 96.

may be muddied with rain, but it will be limpid as ever. The things seen do not go deep enough to touch our real life. They are but as the winds that fret and the currents that sway the surface and shallower levels of the ocean, while the great depths are still. The circumference is all a whirl; the centre is at rest.

¶ In the early folk-lore of various countries, we come, here and there, on certain statements which have a singular affinity with what St. Paul says in the text and which may possibly have had something to do with the form, at least, of the thought which he there expresses. I refer to the accounts which are given about cruel giants and other monstrosities who could not be killed by wounds that would at once have ended the life of any other creature. They might be pierced through the heart with the sword of an assailant, they might be hurled from a precipice that should have broken all their bones, they might be left for dead in a burning fire that should have consumed them effectually, but nothing could touch their life, or even seriously hurt them. For, according to the story, their life was not in their own bodies, but somewhere else, and carefully concealed so that no one could reach it. It is represented as being, perhaps, hid in an egg, which is in the belly of a fish, which is swimming in a lake, which lies among inaccessible mountains or an island that is far away in some untravelled ocean; and unless you can discover that ocean and the island and the lake, and catch the fish, and lay hold on the egg, nothing you can do will anywise affect the life of the terrible being you are anxious, for some reason, to destroy. As a rule, the stories tell us that, after many had tried and failed, a hero comes at last who, by some means or other, discovers the secret, overcomes all the difficulties, and destroys the creature who had wrought so much mischief, but with that part of them we have at present nothing to do. What I want to point out is simply the idea, which seems to have been pretty widely prevalent, that one's life could be kept apart from one's self, and so hid as to be very hard to reach, and that no injury to one's body could anywise affect such a life.[1]

¶ Botanists tell us that there is a beautiful arrangement in nature for clothing our barren moorlands with a vesture of heather. The heather cannot nourish itself, but must be nourished, so to speak, by a foster-parent, which prepares its food for it, reducing the peat upon which it grows into a condition that renders it capable of being absorbed and assimilated. So at the

[1] Walter C. Smith.

extreme ends of the roots of the heather, you will find mingled with the finer fibres a tissue of delicate whitish threads. This is not part of the heather itself, but a separate plant or fungus which lives in association with the heather, and does for it the kindliest service, nourishing its vitals at the fountain head. Microscopic examination of the fine rootlets of the heather shows how filaments of its hidden friend and partner penetrate into the very cells of the texture of these rootlets, conveying life and strength to the whole plant. Without the help of this hidden intermediary the heather would wither and die. And whenever you transplant heather without securing its associate feeder, your labour is in vain, the heather infallibly dies. So our spiritual life is linked with Christ and hid in God. We are identified with Christ, and He communicates to us His own life. "Without me," He says, "ye can do nothing." But, says the Apostle, as if responding to Him, "I can do all things in Christ which strengtheneth me." The hidden life of Christ works deep down at the roots of our being, and the chief hindrance to a noble and rich and fruitful career is that we do not sufficiently realize our oneness with Christ and His readiness to vitalize all our spiritual and moral energies.[1]

Since Eden, it keeps the secret!
  Not a flower beside it knows
To distil from the day the fragrance
  And beauty that flood the rose.

Silently speeds the secret
  From the loving eye of the sun
To the willing heart of the flower:
  The life of the twain is one.

Folded within my being,
  A wonder to me is taught,
Too deep for curious seeing
  Or fathom of sounding thought,

Of all sweet mysteries holiest!
  Faded are rose and sun!
The Highest hides in the lowliest;
  My Father and I are one.[2]

[1] Hugh Macmillan. [2] Charles G. Ames.

III.

The Coming Manifestation.

1. *The present has in it the promise of the future.*—Eternal life is a condition of the soul into which we may pass without dying; indeed, at any moment this resurrection may take place, we may pass from death to life, or also from life to death; the lower sphere may be exchanged for the higher, or the higher for the lower. And so when the lawyer asked the great question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the answer practically was that the love of God and man *is* eternal life. It is a change in the sphere and level of life and emotion now, not a succeeding stage in our existence. In fact, to be spiritually minded, this is life; and to be carnally minded, this is death. The teaching of the Apostles is everywhere clear. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Our citizenship is in heaven." "We have come to the heavenly Jerusalem." "Christ is our life." The Gospel Christ preached is pre-eminently one of the present world; it is the release from the grip of sin now, that real redemption which we may daily verify when we give up any wrong act for the love of Christ; it is the presence of God in the heart now.

Union with Christ by faith is the condition of a real communication of life. "In him was life," says St. John, meaning thereby to assert, in the language of our Epistle, that "in him were all things created, and in him all things consist." Life in all its forms is dependent on union in varying manner with the Divine, and upheld only by His continual energy. The creature must touch God or perish. Of that energy the Uncreated Word of God is the channel—"with thee is the fountain of life." As the life of the body, so the higher self-conscious life of the thinking, feeling, striving soul is also fed and kept alight by the perpetual operation of a higher Divine energy, imparted in like manner by the Divine Word. Therefore, with deep truth, the Psalmist goes on to say, "In thy light shall we see light"—and therefore, too, St. John continues: "And the life was the light of men."

¶ The training of a prince may, in some respects, be very much like that of other youths. He may have to endure hard-

ness, to fare simply, to toil patiently, to deny himself, that he may be able for the tasks that await him by and by. All that will be good for him, and especially it will be needful that he should learn to have princely ideas of duty and a regal nobleness of mind; for the higher his position is, the more worthless would he appear if he were given to any kind of baseness. He must look, therefore, to the things that are above. He must converse with high affairs in a high strain of thought. Any littleness would only be made more glaring by contrast with the grandeur of his position at last. While his life is for a season hidden, then, it must be carefully preparing for the final manifestation of its regal dignity, which otherwise he would only dishonour.[1]

2. *The manifestation of Christ will carry with it the manifestation of all life hid with Him in God.*—There is nothing in the future, however glorious and wonderful, that has not its germ and vital beginning in our union with Christ here by humble faith. The great hopes which we may cherish are gathered up here into the words, "He shall be manifested." That is far more than was conveyed by the old translation—"shall appear." The roots of our being shall be disclosed, for He shall come, "and every eye shall see him." We shall be seen for what we are. The outward life shall correspond to the inward. The faith and love which often struggled in vain for expression and were thwarted by the obstinate flesh, as a sculptor trying to embody his dream might be by a block of marble with many a flaw and speck, shall then be able to reveal themselves completely. Whatever is in the heart shall be fully visible in the life. Stammering words and imperfect deeds shall vex us no more. "His name shall be in their foreheads"—no longer only written in fleshy tables of the heart, and partially visible in the character, but stamped legibly and completely on life and nature. They shall walk in the light, and so shall be seen of all. Here the truest followers of Christ shine like an intermittent star, seen through mist and driving cloud: "Then shall the righteous *blaze forth* like the sun in the kingdom of my Father."

¶ The underground river, fed from hidden springs, will emerge in due time as a clear, full stream, at which the nations may drink. The coral polyp builds steadily on under the water amidst the ceaseless beating of the surf, and ere long there appears above

[1] Walter C. Smith.

the surface the atoll reef with its waving palms and still lagoon. Realities have their own way of asserting themselves, even in a world of shadows often mistaken for realities. The hidden life is the most potent life, even amidst the half-lights of earth, and the time will come when the day will break and the shadows flee away. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also with him be manifested in glory."

¶ The Great Artist will then unveil His work, that has been long preparing in secret and behind the screen of an infirm decaying body, wrought out through the machinery of nature, which labours and groans beneath "the bondage of corruption" and moves with harsh grinding and torturing of the spirit through the flesh as it is placed upon the wheel. Yet from this factory and loom of time, with its unsightliness and disarray and its thousand seeming-cruel processes, God's fairest work is coming, the adornment of heaven and the wealth of eternity. The Lord and Redeemer of men, when He appears the second time, shall appear "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."[1]

¶ As the traveller starting for some distant mountain sees at the outset its cloudy and mysterious summits hanging in the far-off horizon, and is conscious that even then their presence adds a beauty and an interest to all the nearer landscape through which he is passing; but, as he advances on his way, every hour they engross a larger portion of the view, they become clearer and nearer, and fresh scenes of wonder and glory open up, till at last, without any perceptible break, he finds that his path has led him into the very bosom of the eternal hills; even so there are some whose way through this world is beautified and glorified, from dawn till eve, by the bright vision of the world beyond the grave. For them earth melts into heaven, and heaven sheds its radiance upon earth.[2]

3. *This is the enduring life.*—Such a life has nothing in it of the ephemeral and passing. It has no relation to the body, or the death of the body. Physical death is not its end, or its beginning, or its opposite. The life in God partakes of the Divine—unchangeableness and infinity and eternity. All on earth passes away; even the everlasting hills will at last change and disappear; but if we ourselves become in some way incorporate with the life of God, then we are safe for ever in His everlasting arms. Our life is verily "hid with Christ in God."

As Ralph Erskine puts it: "When risen with Christ you have

[1] G. G. Findlay, *The Things Above*, 30. [2] E. H. Bradby.

a Treasure, a Treasurer, and a Treasury. 'Your Life'—that is your Treasure; 'is hid with Christ'—He is your Treasurer; 'in God'—that is your Treasury. Your life is hidden for secrecy and for security. The world knows not the sons of God; they draw their strength and inspiration from a secret source, they fix their hopes upon things unseen. Their life is hidden from the eyes of men. This makes it all the more secure. The foundations are beyond the reach of pickaxe or dynamite. The believer's security does not lie exposed to the malice of man or devil. It is the security of a union which cannot be dissolved, of a trusteeship which never fails, of a covenant which cannot be broken. God the Father is the author of the Covenant. God the Son is the faithful guardian or trustee. God the Holy Ghost is the bond of the union. Secure indeed are those whose life is hid with Christ in God."

¶ The uncertainty as to what awaits us ahead, beyond the limit of our spiritual vision—this uncertainty, this mystery—is the only possibility of our life, because it secures the forward movement. We walk, as it were, through an underground passage and see ahead of us the illuminated point of the exit; but that we may reach this exit, ahead of us, in front of us must be an emptiness. The eternal life is eternal for the very reason that it deploys before us infinitely. If it were completely unfolded before us, and we could comprehend it here, in our temporal, carnal existence, it would not be the eternal life, as there would be nothing left beyond it.[1]

¶ If you address any average modern English company as believing in an eternal life; and then endeavour to draw any conclusions from this assumed belief, as to their present business, they will forthwith tell you that "what you say is very beautiful, but it is not practical." If, on the contrary, you frankly address them as *un*believers in eternal life, and try to draw any consequences from that unbelief,—they immediately hold you for an accursed person, and shake off the dust from their feet at you.[2]

IV.

The Present Duty.

1. "Set your mind on the things that are above." The Apostle uses a word which indicates the application of the mind

[1] Tolstoy, *Thoughts and Aphorisms* (*Works*, xix. 81).

[2] Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olive* (*Works*, xviii. 392).

to the observation and study of any object. It is a stronger word and means more than the word "seek" used in verse 1. And what we are urged to do is to let our minds go out upon these things, and rest in quiet contemplation of them. He would have us take them as settled and indubitable facts, clearly revealed to us, and make them the object of our deep, continuous, and interested study. He calls us not to pry into things hidden and recondite, but to ponder things manifest and revealed. It is not to a process of research but to a process of reflection that he urges us. He would have us stand, as it were, at the gate of heaven, and inspire its hallowed atmosphere, and bask in radiance of its unutterable splendour. A mere baptism with the waters of the river of life will not suffice; what he exhorts us to is to cast ourselves into that heaven-born stream, and repose upon the bosom of its shining and ever-flowing waters. There must be the outgoings of the soul after those supernal realities, and the incomings of these into the soul in return. Our reflections must be after the similitude of those angels that are to be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of man, a continuous and reflexive process, yet ever finding in Him its alpha and its omega, its beginning and its ending, its first and its last.

One sunny day, as on my way I went,
And stooped to pluck the flowers I loved so well,
I saw that on each bloom o'er which I bent,
My shadow fell;
But when my wandering glances left the ground
And travelled sunwards up the shafts of light,
The shadow fell behind me, and I found
That all was bright.

So when, with earthward gaze, we set our minds
On flowers beside life's pathway blooming fair,
Whoever stoops to seize their beauties finds
A shadow there;
But if, with eyes uplifted, we are wont
To scan the heavenward stair the angels trod,
Behind us is the shadow, and in front
The light of God.[1]

[1] E. T. Fowler, *Verses Wise and Otherwise*, 137.

2. If the affections are habitually set on things above, this is the surest evidence of being in a state of grace. In the animal world we see life manifesting itself through an immense gradation, from the sluggish and hardly perceptible animation of the zoophyte up, through that of the insect and reptile tribes, to the finer perceptions and sensibilities of the more perfectly organized animals, until we reach its highest development in man. In all cases we are satisfied life is there, because the results of life are there; but as these become increasingly distinct and manifest, as we ascend the scale of being, so our assurance of it becomes proportionately stronger. It is the same as regards the spiritual life. That life may be very feeble in some, hardly perceptible, a mere zoophytic existence; but if it is there at all, it will show itself by its proper results, and most of all by some measure of spiritual sensibility and relish for spiritual things, the things that are above. And as the life becomes stronger, this manifestation of it will become increasingly distinct and convincing.

¶ By holiness do we not mean something different from virtue? It is not the same as duty, as religious belief. Holiness is the name for an inner grace of nature, an instinct of the soul, by which, though knowing of earthly appetites and worldly passions, the spirit, purifying itself from these and independent of all reason, arguments, and fierce struggles of the will, dwells in living, patient, and confident communion with the seen and unseen good.[1]

¶ Our fathers understood by cultivation of the hidden life the practice of earnest prayer, reverent study of the Bible and devotional books, with meditation and endeavour to make their own by faith the life that is hid with Christ in God. Their fathers before them for nearly two thousand years used similar methods. Have we outgrown them? Are these amongst the old-fashioned ways which we style "early Victorian," and, confident in our maturity, are prepared to leave behind us? The Bible—is it read, known, loved, thought and prayed and wrestled over till its deepest religious teaching is afresh assimilated? The chief interest excited concerning it to-day is aroused by criticism, which in some directions is doing excellent service. But the Bible is essentially a book of religion, not a collection of literary documents. There is a time and a place for examination into the details of its composition, but it is as food for the hidden man of the heart that it is all-important, and it is a question whether

[1] John Morley, *Miscellanies.*

the coming generation in any stratum of society knows the Bible well or appreciates its value for the world. Every Christian prays; but how? One who would know the hidden world of prayer must be a familiar denizen of it; hasty and occasional visits will teach him nothing. Whilst Sir Oliver Lodge is urging the power in the spiritual world of filial communion and those aspirations and petitions which "exert an influence far beyond their conscious range," some Christians, who ought to know better, plead that work is worship, and that social reform is of more importance than "pietistic communings." These things, therefore, ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.[1]

The lowland road is pleasant and the upper road is steep,
The lowland air is windless and its rivers sing of sleep;
When all the kine are gathered and all the pastures mowed,
One should go home at evening along the lowland road.

When stalwart knees bend inward and strong-thewed shoulders tire,
When a man has wrought his utmost and followed his desire,
When he has starved and feasted and borne a heavy load,
How good to come at evening along the lowland road.

But if the white peaks beckon, if one be left to scale,
A man should seek the mountains and shun the lowland vale;
His heart will feel their prompting, and answer to the goad,
And tho' the hour be evening, he'll take the upper road.

When all earth's fruits are gathered on silent field and garth,
When song is at the winepress and mirth is at the hearth,
There is another harvest whose seed we have not sowed—
You'll find the orchards of the Lord upon the upper road.

I'm going by the upper road, for that still holds the sun;
I'm climbing thro' Night's pastures, where starry rivers run;
If you should think to seek me in my old dark abode,
You'll find this writing on the door—"He's on the Upper Road."

3. Setting the mind on things above is conducive to the right discharge of duty and the right endurance of trial. The mind accustomed to Divine contemplation looks at things not on their earthward but on their heavenward side; or rather—may we say?

[1] W. T. Davison, *The Indwelling Spirit*, 301.

—looks at the things of earth from a heavenly point of view. Duty thus is seen not simply as something that has to be done, a task that has to be performed, but as the will of the heavenly Father, which it is an honour and a privilege to His servants to be called to do. Affliction is seen to be light because it is looked at, not as among things seen and temporal, but in its relation to those things which are unseen and eternal. Thus, the man who has his "conversation in heaven," who is occupied with spiritual realities, whose treasure is in heaven, and whose heart is there also, has a power in him for the discharge of duty which the world cannot understand, and a support under trial which the world can neither give nor take away.

¶ Christian prayer is earnest and believing, but it asks for blessings in accordance with the will of the Father. It means good, not harm, for our neighbours as for ourselves; it means bringing ourselves into harmony with the laws of health and right living; it means using to the utmost all the strength and energy that God has put into our hands to bring about the result that we pray for. We cannot pray for food and expect the ravens to bring it to us, like one misguided man whom I met some years ago. He excused himself from work and lived on charity or the small earnings of his wife, on the plea that the Bible commands us to take no thought for the morrow. Prayer means not the halting of effort, but its spur. We cannot ask for peace, and give way at the first provocation to ill-temper and irritability. We cannot pray for unselfishness, and refuse the opportunity to practise it. We cannot pray for success, and expect to achieve it without work. Prayer gives us the assurance that behind our effort is infinite strength, but that effort must measure the best that we have of will, energy, and intelligence. We must bring the inspiration of our ideals into daily living.[1]

We doubt the word that tells us: Ask,
  And ye shall have your prayer;
We turn our thoughts as to a task,
  With will constrained and rare.

And yet we have; these scanty prayers
  Yield gold without alloy:
O God, but he that trusts and dares
  Must have a boundless joy![2]

[1] S. Fallows, *Health and Happiness*, 12.

[2] George MacDonald, "Organ Songs" (*Poetical Works*, ii. 292).

The Indwelling Word.

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The Indwelling Word.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.—Col. iii. 16.

We used to read when we were children about the magician's wand which was waved over the hill-side, and the hill-side opened and disclosed caves full of treasures. Here is a text which might open before us as regards the origin of character and life just such a wealth of unsuspected treasure; or, rather, it might be like that hard rock from which, smitten by Moses at the command of God, there trickled, then poured, then gushed, and then flowed like a river, water which satisfied the thirst of rebellious and murmuring Israel for many a long day.

1. The passage from which the text is taken contains one of the noblest ethical exhortations in the New Testament. The subject of the Epistle is Christ. From first to last it is "Christological" in the fullest sense of the term. It is addressed to those who profess to have accepted Christ; it asserts what that profession must involve. In a very true sense the doctrine or philosophy of the Christian life, which St. Paul is convinced is the true philosophy of humanity, is summed up in one word, the word "Christ." St. Paul seems to say: "You tell me you have accepted Christ, you profess to believe in Christ; you must therefore realize what this profession means, for it is only when you are filled with, and inspired by, an adequate conception of the doctrine of Christ that you can lead, and that you can induce others to lead, a truly Christian life." For St. Paul knew that the life of every man and of every society must inevitably be the expression of some individual and social philosophy. If there is one book in the New Testament which more than another asserts that it does matter what we believe, and that life and conduct,

both individual and social, are ultimately ruled by ideas and convictions, it is this Epistle to the Colossians.

2. Now the Apostle seeks to set forth the true idea of the Christ, as against the false conceptions that were current. He knows that the true conception of the personal Christ is expressed in the Jesus of the Gospels. In the Gospels we study His life, His work, His teaching, His atoning death, His glorious resurrection and ascension, which are all steps in the one process termed by St. John His "glorification." In the Gospels we learn the principles which inspired Him, and of the power with which God endowed Him, for "He was raised by the glory of the Father." At once, so urges the Apostle, follows the inevitable conclusion; the whole human race must walk (for it has received the power to walk) in newness of life.

3. But how are Christian believers to be adequately equipped to present Christ to those outside? You are, says the Apostle, members of a body with mutual obligations, but also with obligations or responsibilities to the world outside you. For the discharge of these obligations, which is of the nature of a continuous service, you must have an equipment. That equipment must satisfy two conditions. The equipment itself is the "word of the Christ," and the first condition is that this "word"—the whole Gospel, the whole body of Messianic truth—dwell in you richly. You must be richly endowed with its contents and its meaning; your relation to it must be that of men who have made themselves masters of a rich possession, who have so thoroughly assimilated this knowledge that it has become part of themselves. This is the first condition. The second is to remember that towards this wealth you have a stewardship, whose exercise and discharge must be characterized by skill. There must be the skill which comes from intimate knowledge, coupled with constant careful practice, but which also assumes the possession and use of an intimate knowledge of the conditions and needs of those towards whom you are stewards. We must remember that knowledge is only one factor in skill. The word presumes the idea of art as well as that of science. So this practical skill is an essential part of your equipment, namely, the skill which comes

from daily discipline and exercise in the use as well as in the acquisition of knowledge.

¶ It is ideas that rule. It is ideas that influence and change the conduct both of the individual and of society. History is full of proofs of this. And "the word of the Christ" embodies the ideas of the Christ, the ideas which Jesus of Nazareth brought into the world, or upon which He laid special stress. A modern writer on sociology has shown that in lands where the doctrine of the Incarnation has either never been accepted, or where belief in it has been lost, there we find an inadequate conception both of the worth and of the possibilities of man, and that this inadequate conception has resulted in slavery, in regardlessness of the value of human life, in unneccssary human suffering, in the degradation of woman, and generally in the debasement of humanity.[1]

I.

The Word of Christ.

1. What are we to understand by the "word of Christ"? You might, perhaps, interpret it to mean the recorded utterances of Christ that are found in the Gospels. In that case the "word of Christ" would be the same thing as the "words of Christ." You might understand it as meaning the New Testament, because there you have not only the record of Christ's uttered words, but also the explanation of His work and His person and His life given by His own Apostles. You might understand it as meaning the whole of the Bible, because in some sense here the Lord Jesus Christ is for us the centre; to Him all the early books point, and from Him all the later books lead on and forward. But the "word of Christ" does not consist merely in words written upon parchment, or in any number of words printed in a book. When St. Paul said, "Let the word of Christ abide in you," he did not mean, "Let the book abide in you." His words are spirit, and they are life. As poetry has been defined to be the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, so the word of Christ is the quintessence of all sacred utterance. All that it tells us concerning Himself is mind and heart. It is the book because through the book so largely comes our knowledge of Him. But

[1] W. E. Chadwick.

it is the voice of Him who speaks through the book only to those faithful souls who come to catch His accents; and St. Paul says, "When you hear Him speak after that fashion take His word into the innermost recesses of your soul, let it dwell there, and fashion your whole character."

¶ At this time I wrote, on a lovely morning in April: "'The Breath of Life' seems to be in the air. On our ride Signor (G. F. Watts) begins to search for the unfound word which Professor Max Müller calls 'The Self,' but from which it is difficult to divest the 'Myself' that has so long been associated with it. 'The Word,' 'The Life,' 'The Fire of Life,' the 'I Am,' Matthew Arnold's 'Tendency that maketh for Righteousness,' even our own word 'God,' seemed to him to contain but a fraction of what the word should convey. He tells me that he is conscious of this Presence—seeks after it and knows that in every great effort of the human mind, from Egypt to Greece, from Greece to Wordsworth, in the poetic philosophy of India and in all sacred books of the East, there is to be found a consciousness of the Presence. 'In those Parthenon fragments, in all great art, I hear the organ tone; in my own work I am always trying for it. Yes,' he added, answering something I had said, 'religion is nothing unless it is the music that runs through all life, from the least thing that we can do to the greatest. After all there is very little to be said; we know we have to desire to live well, to love goodness and to aspire after it, that is for God: to live in love towards all, and to do rightly towards all, that is for man. There is only one great mystery—the Creator. We can never return to the early ideas of Him as a kind white-bearded old man. If I were ever to make a symbol of the Deity, it would be as a great vesture into which everything that exists is woven.'" [1]

(1) There is now in the world, and especially in Christendom, something Christian that never came through the Scriptures—something that has come down through the ages by what may be called the tradition of souls, unwritten and almost unspoken. Jesus Christ, by His living presence in this world, and by His spoken word, generated and set in motion a spiritual force that has never died, and never will. But the rule of this force is in the Scriptures. Its explanation is the Scripture. It is not so much a tradition that could be expressed in any human language as a living influence that flows on, and must flow as long as the

[1] Mrs. Watts, in *George Frederic Watts*, ii. 244.

world lasts. But that general influence is not what, in the ordinary and intelligible sense, we can call "the word of Christ." This is, manifestly, something which is to be apprehended by our intelligence, to be kept in our memory; which is to operate, through the understanding, upon the affections, and the conscience, and the will; which is to shape the habits and rule the life.

¶ Some inscriptions are written in antiquated letters, in quaint and curious characters, or even in dead and obsolete tongues. But you never paint a finger-post with Saxon letters or German characters; you draw them broad and square, so that he who runs may read it in his most familiar alphabet. And Christ's Word is not only the path but the finger-post, inscribed so broad and clear in the world's vernacular that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need make no mistake.[1]

The sacred word, so fraught with use,
Is bright with beauty too,
Oft startling us like blooms profuse
Upon a sudden view.

But more amazing than the bloom
Which all the trees bestuds,
See, peering from the leafy gloom,
A hundred thousand buds.

O, bud for ever, glorious tree,
O, ever blossom thus;
So shall thy good fruits plenteously
Hang ripening for us.[2]

(2) The literal word of Christ is one of the most wonderful things that ever has been in the world. All at once, up in Galilee, a silent man—for He was then known only as a man—began to speak. Not from Roman rostrum, not in terms of Greek philosophy, not as a Jewish Rabbi with Targum and Cabala at hand, but simply and naturally to simple and ordinary men wherever they could be got together—in village synagogue, on the seashore, among the boats and nets, on the road, on the hill-sides—and as He spake, the words seemed literally to root themselves in the hearts of some of the hearers. There were many who heard and idly wondered and straightway forgot; there were some who heard

[1] J. Hamilton, *Works*, vi. 24. [2] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 20.

and hated what they heard, because it seemed to make against their own power and influence. But others caught the word like living seed, and gave it living soil within them, where it grew and soon became the power of their whole life. But so it was, amid friends, and foes, and crowds of thoughtless, indifferent people, the Speaker continued to speak; and as He spake the word grew and multiplied and became increasingly a living spiritual force in the life of the whole nation.

¶ God has given only two perfect things to this lost world. One of them is the incarnate Word, which is the Lord Jesus Christ; the other is the written Word, which is the Holy Scripture. There is a Divine element and a human element in both.[1]

¶ Art, literature, philosophy, theology, statesmanship, science, civilization have made colossal strides forward, but Jesus stands just where He stood two thousand years ago, and the world is still at His feet. Why is it? The Gospel is an old story, the preacher's sermon is an old message, religion is an old song, and yet the heart of the race stops to listen, and ever and anon some soul, mantling with the light of Calvary's glory, rises up to confess that the old song has brought the new life. Christ is the same because Christ is the best. There is no progress beyond Him. He is all the heart longs for.[2]

¶ We are told that Christ spoke to men as one that had authority—not an authority like that of the Scribes and Pharisees, which is given from without, but an authority which flowed naturally from the absolute conviction of the truth of His own words. Of this too we might find imperfect examples within our own experience. For when a man is possessed with a truth and feels that he has a mission to utter it, he becomes a power in the world. So Christ, having received the truth from His Father, brought it down to men. The opinions of the world, the customs of society, the traditions of Churches—they too had an authority, but it was of another sort. They did not come immediately from God; they did not find a witness in the better mind and conscience of man—they were the words of an age and country, and might be even unmeaning or absurd in some other age or country. But the words of Christ were eternal and unchangeable; as long as human nature lasts, while the world stands—these and these alone shall never pass away.[3]

[1] James H. Brookes.
[2] J. I. Vance, *Royal Manhood*, 243.
[3] B. Jowett.

Give me the Word—the Word!
Leave me, I pray, with the Word, and the Spirit alone:
Thus shall the Way, and the Truth be made known;
Thus all the depths of my soul with the life shall be stirred.

Who but Himself could tell,
Save in dead words, such a story as this that I learn
Straight from the wonderful pages that burn
Still with the light that sometime on the Mystery fell,

When He revealed His Son,
Chosen to manifest God, in unspeakable love
Linking our lives with His own life above,
Making them one, as Himself and the Father are One—

Spirit and flesh in Him—
God, the Creator, and man, whom He formed from the dust,
Meeting in Christ whom, receiving, I trust,
Seeing the Life that to wisdom and reason is dim.

Give me the Word, I say!
Let me go into its depths for the treasure I seek;
Let me be still, that the Spirit may speak,
Filling the gloom of my soul with His marvellous ray.

Give me the Word—the Word!
Leave me, I pray, with the Word and the Spirit to be:
Let the one Life flow unhindered through me;
Let the glad song of His joy in the silence be heard.[1]

2. Let us look at some of the chief characteristics of the word.

(1) *Its simplicity and wisdom.*—Who that has ever really studied the words of Christ can help being struck by these characteristic features? The truths He teaches are wise and deep; they provide food for thought for men in all ages. And yet the words which convey them are so simple that he who runs may read. In a word, the teaching of Jesus is like the sea that has shallows in which a little child can wade safely, and unfathomable depths whose bottom no lead can ever touch.

Simplicity and wisdom—that is a combination which is not always, or even generally, found in teachers. Wise men are very often hard to understand when they try to teach others, and deep

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Songs*, 97.

truths seem to be almost inseparable from difficult words and intricate sentences. Now and again, but very rarely, we come across a teacher who is head and shoulders above his fellows. And if we investigate we shall invariably find that the secret of his superiority is that he has the gift of simplicity as well as of wisdom, and so is enabled to impart to others the knowledge he has acquired and the truths he has grasped.

¶ The excellence of Holy Scripture does not arise from a laboured and far-fetched elocution, but from a surprising mixture of simplicity and majesty, which is a double character, so difficult to be united that it is seldom to be met with in compositions merely human.[1]

¶ The teaching of Christ is simple, but it is the simple which is always the hardest to understand; for complexity like mechanism may be puzzling, but it is never profound—patience can always unravel it; it is a compound and can readily be reduced to its elements; but simplicity is, as it were, an element in itself, and is profound with the profundity of deep clear water. The complex may be a riddle, but the simple is a mystery. The apprehension of Christ's profound simplicity is the reward only of long and complex spiritual struggle—except, of course, in the case of those happy ones who come into it at birth as into an inheritance. It is the simplicity which can only come of experience—or genius.[2]

¶ If we compare the talk of great men and women "who will cause this age to be remembered," one element is to be found in them all—a certain directness, simplicity, and vivid reality; a gift for reaching their hearers at once, giving straight from themselves, and not in reflections from other minds; sunshine, in short, not moonshine. Perhaps something of this may be due to the habit of self-respect and self-reliance which success and strength of purpose naturally create. Many uncelebrated people have the grace of convincing simplicity, but I have never met a really great man without it. As one thinks of it one recognizes that a great man is greater than we are, because his aim (consciously or unconsciously) is juster, his strength stronger and less strained; his right is more right than ours, his certainty more certain; he shows us the best of that which concerns him, and the best of ourselves too in that which concerns *us* in his work or his teaching.[3]

[1] Newman.

[2] Richard Le Gallienne, *The Religion of a Literary Man*, 68.

[3] Lady Thackeray Ritchie, *Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning*, 73.

Lord, with the children's wisdom make us wise;
For to simplicity Thou dost reveal
The way unto Thyself, and dost unseal
The mysteries that baffle learning's eyes.

We crave the knowledge that for ever lies
Deeper than words. It is enough to feel
Thy presence ever bringing hopes that heal,
Light that can lead, and love that satisfies.

Thy silence hath more meaning than our speech;
And so, beyond our wordy strife and vain,
By sorrowing and gladness, loss and gain,
Bring us into Thy quietness, and teach
Those deep simplicities that mock the brain,
Yet lie within the heart's most easy reach.[1]

(2) *Its preciousness and power.*—Some words are dead logs and others are living truths; some words are like living creatures that have hands and feet; there are some words which, as you listen to them, make the blood move fast and the pulse beat rapidly, and you want to go forth then and there to do something worth doing; they are words that have life about them. Such words are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, for they are spirit and they are life. That means that if they dwell in us they minister to our life. Man does not live by bread alone, although he is perpetually trying to persuade himself that he does. What is it that we live by in the life of the spirit? Some of us have in our reading experienced the keen joy of coming across a new lifegiving thought; it is like the joy of an astronomer who, watching the skies, finds new planets come within his ken. We are like a discoverer looking out on the great Pacific ocean of truth, and in a moment there opens before us a world of truth, as by a single flash of insight. But there are no words that will do this for us like the living Word of Christ.

¶ I have been greatly cheered by assurances which have recently reached me again and again of the blessing which God has caused to rest on my ministry in past years, and of the light and strength which, through God's grace, some are finding in my books; but I seem to have a great deal to say that I have never said yet, and I want to say it. How wonderful the gospel of

[1] P. C. Ainsworth, *Poems and Sonnets*, 77.

Christ is! I have been thinking about it and preaching about it for more than forty years, and yet there seem to be vast provinces of truth in it which I am only just beginning to explore.[1]

¶ In the Green Room at Dresden, where for centuries the Saxon princes have gathered their gems and treasures until they have become worth millions of pounds, may be seen a silver egg, a present to one of the Saxon queens, which when you touch a spring opens and reveals a golden yolk. Within this is hid a chicken, whose wing when pressed also flies open, disclosing a splendid gold crown, studded with jewels. Nor is this all; another secret spring being touched, hidden in the centre is found a magnificent diamond ring. So it is with every truth and promise of God's word—a treasure within a treasure; and all to enrich and bless us.[2]

¶ To all men's hearts the words of Christ find a way when they are rightly considered. For no one will say that to hate is better than to love, darkness better than light, impurity than holiness, falsehood better than truth. And it may very likely be the case that when all the endless books and tomes of scholastic divinity, ancient and modern, shall have ceased to interest mankind, the words of Christ, and these alone, shall prevail.[3]

(3) *Its gracious accent.*—When a person speaks there is not only the thing he says, but the tone in which he says it. There is a dry and flippant tone which withers the sincerity out of the kindest words, and there is a full-hearted tone which will fill the most common words with a melting magic. And so there is not only Christ's *Word*, but Christ's way of speaking it. "The Word dwelt among us full of grace and truth." What Jesus spoke was truth, the way He spoke was gracious, so gracious that all men marvelled hearing the words which proceeded out of His mouth. Christ's tone was gracious. He spoke the truth, but He spoke the truth in love. Even when moved with indignation at hypocrisy and hardness of heart, there was love enough to make His anger far more awful, that absence of bitterness when goodness frowns on guilt—the wrath of the Lamb.

¶ A chemist may analyse the wine of Lebanon, and he may tell you that it contains so many salts and alkalies; and you may combine all these, you may mix them in the just proportions; but chemistry will never create what the vintage yielded. To make the wine of Lebanon needs Lebanon itself—the mountain with its

[1] R. W. Dale, *Life*, 631. [2] Principal Holliday. [3] B. Jowett.

gushing heart and aromatic springs. A theologian may analyse the Christian doctrine. He may tell you how many truths and tenets this Bible contains; and you may combine them all. You may put the sound words together and make a system of them, but that system, however orthodox, so long as it abides alone, is not the Word of Christ. It needs Christ's own mind, His loving heart and benignant spirit, to reproduce the truth as it is in Jesus. It needs the Evangelic truth and the Evangelic tone to go together. They are essential to one another, and it is Gospel only when they are combined.[1]

¶ He whom God sent into the world, to be the Light of the world, and Head of the whole Church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue, for the imitation of all—the Shepherd whom the whole flock shall follow wherever He goes—even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate heart; and His virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections.[2]

¶ The Sacred Infancy teaches us tenderness; the Passion tenderness; the Blessed Sacrament tenderness; the Sacred Heart tenderness. But look at the common life of Jesus among men, and you will see more clearly what this tenderness is like. There is first the tenderness of our Lord's outward deportment. The narrative of Palm Sunday is an instance of it. Also His way with His disciples, His way with sinners, and His way with those in affliction or grief who threw themselves in His road. He quenched not the smoking flax nor broke the bruised reed. This was a complete picture of Him. There was tenderness in His very looks, as when He looked on the rich young man and loved Him: and St. Peter was converted by a look. His whole conversation was imbued with tenderness. The tone of His parables, the absence of terrors in His sermons, the abyss of forgiveness which His teaching opens out, all exemplify this. He is no less tender in His answer to questions, as when He was accused of being possessed, and when He was struck on the face. His very reprimands were steeped in tenderness; witness the woman taken in adultery, James and John, and the Samaritan, and Judas; nor was His zeal less tender, as was evidenced when He rebuked the brothers who would fain have called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan villagers, and also by the sweet meekness of His divine indignation when He cleared the Temple. Now if our Lord is our model, and if His spirit is ours, it is plain that a Christian-like tenderness must make a deep impression upon our

[1] J. Hamilton, *Works*, vi. 40.

[2] Jonathan Edwards.

spiritual life; and indeed give it its principal tone and character. Without tenderness we can never have that spirit of generosity in which we must serve God.[1]

II.

Our Appropriation of the Word.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you." The word "dwell" means more than a temporary lodging. You are said to dwell in the house you inhabit; it becomes your home; you feel at ease in it; you are at liberty in it; you are welcome in it; you do as you like in it; you have authority in it. That is what is meant here. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you." He does not say —"visit you; come to you occasionally; reside for a time with you." No, but "inhabit, reside continually; have a *home* in you; be welcome to you; be at ease in you; have authority in you; do as it likes with you; regulate and dispose and arrange everything in you."

St. Paul regards the word as an inhabitant of the soul's chamber, so that without it the Christian character would be like a human body without a face, like a face without an eye, like one of those gaunt, untenanted dwellings that you see sometimes staring you in the face, and giving no signs of happy occupancy; it needs men and women to dwell in it to give it shape and character. He says, "Let the word of Christ be in your heart of hearts as that which will clothe and form and fashion and give significance and character to your life. Let it abide in you richly in all wisdom."

¶ A human life without the indwelling word of God is as empty as a landscape without human beings in it. All true landscape, whether simple or exalted, depends primarily for its interest on connexion with humanity, or with spiritual powers. Banish your heroes and nymphs from the classical landscape—its laurel shades will move you no more. Show that the dark clefts of the most romantic mountain are uninhabited and untraversed; it will cease to be romantic. Fields without shepherds and without fairies will have no gaiety in their green, nor will the noblest masses of ground or colours of cloud arrest

[1] F. W. Faber.

or raise your thoughts, if the earth has no life to sustain, and the heaven none to refresh.[1]

1. Let the word of Christ dwell *in the memory.*—Let it dwell in the memory, for there is the place where we should plant the seed. As the seed goes into the soil of the earth and the soil of the earth does not understand it; so the seed of the truth of Christ goes into our memory, and our memory does not understand it. But it strikes its living roots down into our thoughts, and by and by we are lifted—transfigured into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The morning, the springtime of life, is the time to sow the memory with the truth of Christ. In the springtime, when the soil is moist and warm, it takes in the seed and gives back quickly; but in the summer, after the July sun has exhausted the moisture, the seed perishes; and, if scattered over the beaten track, it is wasted. So, the time to pack the memory with the truth of Christ is in youth, before the hot sun of middle-age has exhausted the soil of its ambition, thought, and imagination; before the impress of the busy world has come upon the soul.

¶ John Ruskin, that master writer of English prose, says that when he was a boy his mother compelled him to memorize chapter after chapter of the Old Testament, particularly the Psalms, and chapter after chapter of the New Testament; and now whatever John Ruskin has written is filled with quotations from the Bible. As you can taste the June clover in the sweet country butter, so you can taste the Bible in the writings of John Ruskin.[2]

¶ It has been remarked by those who have had wide opportunities for observation that memory is a most important part of the basis of intellectual pre-eminence. The information we can gather regarding the early training of James Kidd bears out this high estimate that is taken of the function of memory in mental and moral development. When he was a mere child he not only read, but was able to repeat without book, the greater part of the Gospel of John. Every day his mother gave him his portion, causing him to commit to memory the passage that was read, and putting questions to him to induce him to ponder and digest what he had acquired, so that the truth entered into his growing intelligence, and was not a mere mechanical appropriation.

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, v. (*Works*, vii. 255). [2] O. P. Gifford.

When he was an old man, Dr. Kidd often spoke with grateful emotion of the gracious wisdom of his mother in being at such pains so to present Jesus Christ to his mind as to beget in him reverence and love that hallowed the springs of his life.[1]

I have a room whereinto no one enters
  Save I myself alone:
  There sits a blessed memory on a throne,
There my life centres.

While winter comes and goes—oh tedious comer!—
  And while its nip-wind blows;
  While bloom the bloodless lily and warm rose
Of lavish summer.

If any should force entrance he might see there
  One buried yet not dead,
  Before whose face I no more bow my head
Or bend my knee there;

But often in my worn life's autumn weather
  I watch there with clear eyes,
  And think how it will be in Paradise
When we're together.[2]

2. Let the word of Christ dwell *in the imagination.*—Memory combined with imagination is a very marvellous power, but alone it is of very little use. A man's memory may be packed with great principles, but they are of no use to him, because they have not entered into his life through faith. But what is faith? It is trust in a person; dependence upon the word of the person. But it is more than that; it is the imagining power of the soul. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for; it is the evidence of things not seen." Let the word of Christ dwell in your imagination. Brood over it. Give yourself to it until all doubt, all mists of obscurity pass away. Rise with it to the heavenlies where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

¶ I had a hot march to Blonay among the vines, and between their dead stone walls; once or twice I flagged a little, and began to think it tiresome; then I put my *mind* into the scene, instead of suffering the body only to make report of it; and looked at it

[1] *Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen*, 5. [2] Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 334.

with the possession-taking grasp of the imagination—the true one; it gilded all the dead walls, and I felt a charm in every vine tendril that hung over them. It required an effort to maintain the feeling: it was poetry while it lasted, and I felt that it was only while under it that one could draw, or invent, or give glory to, any part of such a landscape. I repeated "I am in *Switzerland*" over and over again, till the name brought back the true group of associations, and I felt I had a soul, like my boy's soul, once again. I have not insisted enough on this source of all great contemplative art. The whole scene without it was but sticks and stones and steep dusty road.[1]

3. Let the word of Christ dwell *in the affections*.—Pascal said faith must be imbued with feeling or else it will always be vacillating. Of how much modern scepticism have you not there the explanation! A man does not feel deeply his faith, else he would not wave to and fro and be shaken by every wind of doctrine. The word of Christ will not dwell in a man's mind unless it dwells in a man's heart; it will not give the intellect contact with truth unless it graciously sways the currents of his feelings. There are some scents which are as exquisite as the breath of spring, but they are faint and evanescent, you hardly discern them in the air before they are gone; there are others that cling to us and yet never pall. So it is with sounds; there are some tunes that cling to us, that we cannot banish, and that we would not banish if we could.

¶ I remember reading, in a book about travels in South America, about the water-vine. A traveller may be going about not knowing how to quench his thirst, but if he sees one of these plants growing his difficulties are at an end, for he has only to sever the stem and a stream of fresh cold water flows forth to quench the thirst. The reason is the plant is full of sap. The character is full of sap if the word of Christ really dwells in a man's heart.[2]

¶ Jesus' idea lifts Christianity above the plane of arid discussion and places it in the region of poetry, where the emotions have full play and Faith is vision. Theology becomes the explanation of the fellowship between the soul and Jesus. Regeneration is the entrance into His life, Justification the partaking of His Cross, Sanctification the transformation into His

[1] Ruskin, in E. T. Cook's *Life of John Ruskin*, i. 246.

[2] W. T. Davison.

character, Death the coming of the Lord, Heaven His unveiled Face. Doctrines will be but moods of the Christ-consciousness; parables of the Christ-life. Suffering will be the baptism of Jesus and the drinking of His cup, and if every saint has not the stigmata on his hands and feet, he will at least, like Simon the Cyrenian, have the mark of the Cross upon his shoulder. And service will be the personal tribute to Jesus, whom we shall recognize under any disguise.[1]

4. Let the word of Christ dwell richly *in the will.*—Character lies pre-eminently in the sphere of the will. He who would achieve much in the moral life must be capable of mighty endeavours. The place of will in *influence* is hardly less obvious. Only he who can set his goal and steadily and firmly pursue it can hope to count greatly with others.

¶ The Great Teacher has said "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is Christ's will that every power God has given to man shall find its full employ. It is His will that we shall have life and that we shall have it more abundantly. It is the Spirit of Power within, energizing with our spirit—the human will in its highest action. The mystery of that union of the Divine will with the human will none can ever explain. But the mystery is no greater than that of the human will energizing from the centre to the circumference of our entire being. Striving to harmonize your will with the will of God, you will learn to make the best use of this greatest and grandest of your unused powers.[2]

¶ The common characteristic of the virtues lies in a state of will—a will in harmony with the good. The harmony may indeed be far from perfect; but the more nearly it is approached, the higher is the virtue. Still further, we may be only faintly conscious of the nature of the good which is being realized in our own character. By instinct and training a man may show himself brave and his own master, without thinking much of the ends thereby achieved. Yet virtue is a state of consciousness —not mere instinct. It does not, of course, require elaborate reflection upon our own motives; far less does it involve the morbid self-examination which turns life to bitterness. Its consciousness is not a consciousness of the individual self and its struggles and weaknesses so much as a contemplation of, and firm hold on, the ideal self—the good which we approach in the

[1] John Watson, *The Mind of the Master.*

[2] S. Fallows, *Health and Happiness*, 148.

very act of striving after it. From this point of view, the attitude which at once apprehends and wills the good is the root of all the virtues. This may be called the Good Will.[1]

Thou who mad'st the mighty clock
Of the great world go;
Mad'st its pendulum swing and rock,
Ceaseless to and fro;
Thou whose will doth push and draw
Every orb in heaven,
Help me move by higher law
In my spirit graven.

Like a planet let me swing—
With intention strong;
In my orbit rushing sing
Jubilant along;
Help me answer in my course
To my seasons due;
Lord of every stayless force,
Make my Willing true.[2]

5. Let the word of Christ dwell richly *in the whole life.*—The word should manifest the rich abundance of its dwelling in men by opening their minds to receive "every kind of wisdom." Where the gospel dwells in its power in a man's spirit, and is intelligently meditated on and studied, it will flower in principles of thought and action applicable to all subjects, and touching the whole horizon of human life. All, and more than all, the wisdom which these false teachers promised in their mysteries, is given to the babes and the simple ones who treasure the word of Christ in their hearts, and the least among them may say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." That gospel which the child may receive has "infinite riches in a narrow room," and, like some tiny black seed, for all its humble form, has hidden in it the promise and potency of wondrous beauty of flower, and nourishment of fruit. Cultured and cared for in the heart where it is sown, it will unfold into all truth which a man can receive or God can give, concerning God and man, our nature, duties,

[1] W. R. Sorley, *The Moral Life*, 65.

[2] George MacDonald, "Violin-Songs" (*Poetical Works*, i. 354).

hopes and destinies, the tasks of the moment, and the glories of eternity.

¶ Is it possible that from such a life as Jesus lived so long ago, a life that was lived back in the very dust of history and that has come down to us in records which seem sometimes to be flecked with tradition and obscured with the distance in which they lived—is it possible that I should get from Him a guidance of my daily life here? Can Jesus really be my Teacher, my Guide, in the actual duties and perplexities of my daily life and lead me into the larger land in which I know He lives? Ah! the man knows very little about the everlasting identity of human nature, little of how the world in all these changeless ages is the same, who asks that—very little, also, of how in every largest truth there are all particulars and details of human life involved; little of how everything that a man is to-day, upon every moment, rests upon some eternal foundation and may be within the power of some everlasting law. The wonder of the life of Jesus is this—and you will find it so and you have found it so if you have ever taken your New Testament and tried to make it the rule of your daily life—that there is not a single action that you are called upon to do of which you need be, of which you will be, in any serious doubt for ten minutes as to what Jesus Christ, if He were here, would have you do under those circumstances and with the material upon which you are called to act. The soul that takes in Jesus' word, the soul that through the words of Jesus enters into the very person of Jesus, the soul that knows Him as its daily presence and its daily law—it never hesitates. There is no single act of your life, there is no single dilemma in which you find yourself placed, in which the answer is not in Jesus Christ. I do not say that you will find some words in Jesus' teachings in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that will detail exactly the condition in which you find yourself placed; but I do say that if, with your human sympathies and your devoted love, you can feel the presence of that Jesus behind the words that He said, the personal perfectness, the Divine life manifested in the human life, there is not a single sin or temptation to sin that will not be convicted. There is where we rest when we claim that Jesus Christ is the Master of the world, that He opens the great richness and infinite distances of the human life, that He shows us what it is to be men.[1]

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Addresses*, 109.